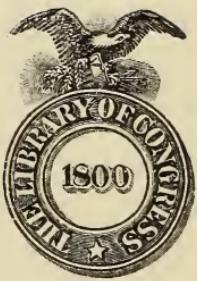


Esther, the Royal Teacher

C. D. Rishel



Class BX 7095

Book R5

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ESTHER, THE ROYAL TEACHER

A STORY OF A DEVOUT, CONSISTENT AND CONSECRATED TEACHER AND THE TEACHING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT AS BELIEVED, TAUGHT AND PRACTICED BY THE CHURCH OF GOD OF NORTH AMERICA

BY

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PUBLISHED BY PERMISSION OF THE BOARD OF PUBLICATION OF THE
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By C. D. RISHEL

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INSCRIBED

To the Young People, the Sunday Schools
and Christian Endeavor Societies
of the Church of God;
and to all earnest searchers
for the truth as revealed in the
New Testament Scriptures;
with a sincere desire that
it may be helpful to all.

INTRODUCTION.

During a number of years the author keenly felt that we, as a church, need to present to our young people in some comprehensive form the distinctive doctrine of the Churches of God of the General Eldership of North America.

Patiently he awaited such a work; but it did not appear.

Finally he was impressed to make the effort himself, but he felt his inability. At last two years ago this impression became a burden,—a responsibility which he no longer could shirk. He believed that by presenting our teaching in a story-form it would be more readily read, and more vivid impression would be made.

Hence, before he began the story of "Esther, The Royal Teacher," and during the writing of each succeeding chapter, he earnestly prayed for guidance and a charitable spirit.

To his mind the story beautifully unfolded itself, as he wrote it, originally, for our excellent SUNDAY SCHOOL GEM, Brother W. A. Laverty, the able editor at once became interested in it; and when the story appeared in the GEM issue of January 1, 1912, and continued in fifteen consecutive issues, he editorially said some very encouraging words.

During this time numerous words of commendation and letters of kindly expression came to the writer.

And shortly following the final chapter, Rev. George Sigler, D.D., possibly the longest ordained minister of the Church of God, wrote this for the GEM.

“Dear Editor GEM: I want to express my very high appreciation of Brother Rishel’s articles on the above theme. I have read them with great interest. I do not see how he could have produced them with such a remarkable line of useful matter to the young Christian other than by the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit. While the GEM has had much that was useful, to my mind Brother Rishel’s articles have met a need that has never been supplied so successfully. It is a remarkable leading of the young Christian from the beginning of the new life on into church membership through the ordinances as we practice them and on to the well established Christian.

I believe the Board of Publication would do a good thing to have the whole published in book form and preserved for future usefulness.

Nothing has as yet been published that meets a need among our young people as this has and will.

GEO. SIGLER.”

The writer has been repeatedly urged to publish the story in book form. At last by the Providence of God the opportunity presented itself.

This story of “Esther, The Royal Teacher” is now presented to the Churches of God with the sincere desire that it may accomplish much good, along with the Bible, in educating our young people in the faith, doctrine and practice of the Churches of God; that they may be rooted and grounded in the Truth; and thus prevented from drifting, or be blown about by every wind of doctrine.

His ardent prayer is that Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, may bless this humble effort.

MOUNT JOY, PA., March 17, 1914.

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ESTHER, THE ROYAL TEACHER.

CHAPTER I.

THE PERPLEXED SUPERINTENDENT.

On a Saturday evening near the close of the old year, Austin Sigler, Superintendent of the Green Street Sunday-school, arose from his knees, where he had been praying for the betterment of the Sunday-school.

As a wise and devoted Superintendent, who had the spiritual welfare of the school resting heavily upon his big heart, he often prayed for the school, often naming class after class and each pupil separately.

This Saturday evening his prayer was more than usually earnest. Two weeks more and New Year will be ushered in, and with it a thousand and more responsibilities, and as many splendid opportunities for great services. As he thought about the Sunday-school he felt that the year just closing showed many golden moments which went to waste, and thousands of good acts which were left to die for want of attention. The Sunday-school stood before him as a mighty burden. He thought of the value of every soul in the school; of the importance of having consecrated teachers who carefully and prayerfully studied their lessons and tactfully taught their classes and tried to win their pupils to the Savior. He lamented the fact that a number of the teachers neglected to lead their pupils to Christ, and failed to instruct others in the truth as believed, taught

and practiced by the church. Then he thought of one particular class known as Class Number 10, consisting of five promising girls of from twelve to fifteen years of age, which was without a regular teacher, and every one of them never professed faith in Jesus as their Savior. This greatly distressed the warm-hearted Superintendent.

If you never heard a loving Superintendent pray, you should have listened to this one. O, how he entreated God for Jesus' sake, to save this class, and to assist him to secure the right kind of a godly teacher. How long he prayed, he did not know. But suddenly he exclaimed, "Blessed Jesus, do, for the sake of those dear girls and in thy blessed name help me to find a teacher, which thou dost approve, for this class." During a few minutes he knelt motionless and in deep meditation. A feeling of peace and satisfaction filled his soul; when it seemed as if an angel talked, saying, "Go and talk it over with your pastor."

This seemed strange to him and contrary to his custom, for he had an idea that the pastor had no need to be consulted. That he was Superintendent, and would run the school as he saw fit. Now to consult the pastor was rather more than he could do. His feelings rebelled against this idea; when a cloud of darkness fell upon him. Now he could neither pray nor meditate. At last he said to himself: "What! I go and talk it over with the pastor? Never! never!" There he was hanging between two fires, until in the anguish of his soul he cried, "O, Lord, what shall I do?" Again, the soft answer came, "Go and talk it over with your pastor." "Dear Lord, thou knowest that I cannot," the Superintendent replied. "How can I do it? I cannot, I cannot go." "Do you love Class Number 10, and are you

anxious to win it for my sake?" something seemed to whisper.

After a short struggle between self-will and Jesus' will, he called out, "I will, Jesus help me." When he heard a gentle voice say, "Go, brother, my grace is sufficient. Go, go."

Superintendent Sigler arose from his knees and quickly put on his overshoes, overcoat and hat and hurried out of the house. As he stood on the porch, a cold rain and snow storm was sweeping down Green street. This deterred him not. It was a continuous whisper, "Go! go! go!"

Fifteen minutes later there was a sharp "Ting, a-ling, ting-ling" of the doorbell of the parsonage. Pastor Charles Hoover had just laid aside the book entitled, "The Christian Ordinances," by C. H. Forney, D.D., which he had been reading.

"I wonder who that is calling at this late hour on a Saturday evening," he thought.

Alice, his only daughter, answered the ring and gently opened the door, when, to her surprise, she saw her Superintendent. "Come in," she exclaimed. "This is a real surprise to have you call to see us, and in particular so late this evening."

Following a few words, Mr. Sigler said, "I came to see your father on important business."

Quickly he was ushered into the presence of his pastor, who stood at the door of his study to welcome the Superintendent. As he extended his hand of welcome he exclaimed, "This certainly is an agreeable surprise to receive a call from you."

"No doubt it is, pastor, but I simply had to come," the Superintendent answered. Following a few words

of welcoming and remarks about the weather, Mr. Sigler laid bare before his pastor the one great burden, and the perplexing question of finding a good teacher for Class Number 10. "Pastor," he exclaimed with a great degree of earnestness, "this class of promising girls so greatly burdens my soul that I am almost bound by a cord, infinite and divine, to find the best of teachers within the limits of Green Street church. We need a tactful teacher, a pious teacher, a studious teacher, a—a—now I have it, a Royal teacher, a teacher called of God."

"May God bless you, my dear Brother Sigler," the pastor enthusiastically exclaimed. "Can you find no one who will measure up to your royal standard?"

"I cannot, dear pastor," Mr. Sigler sadly answered. "I have made it a matter of prayer, and a gentle voice said, 'Go and talk it over with your pastor.' For this cause I came to consult you. Now I am here to learn what the Lord has put in your heart for me to do for Class Number 10."

"God's Spirit moves in mysterious ways, and let us trust he moves in this case," suggested the pastor. "Let us first get in touch with Christ, and ask him to guide us aright. You pray first and I will conclude."

Here Superintendent and pastor alone in that study prayed as they have seldom prayed before. They prayed for wisdom, for grace, for help and for a Royal teacher. They prayed as one man, for one purpose, in one Spirit. As they arose from their knees Pastor Hoover cried out, "I have found her. I have found the Royal teacher."

"Thank God," cried Superintendent Sigler, "who is he, or she?" After meditating a moment to be certain that it was a revelation from above, he exclaimed,

“Sister Esther Forney. She is in my organized adult Bible class. She is the most alert pupil I have. She is studious, she is a true Christian and a remarkable girl in many ways. I think she is past twenty, but her conduct is more of a woman of twenty-eight or thirty. She is a diligent searcher after truth. The Bible is her daily companion. She reads good books. She is an ardent believer in the truth as taught and practiced by the churches of God. During this year she called several times for the loan of several of my books, among them was this book I laid aside when you rung, ‘The Christian Ordinances,’ by Dr. Forney. She also read Winebrenner’s ‘Doctrinal and Practical Sermons,’ and ‘Robert Woodknow’s Difficulties,’ by Charles F. Reitzel. She is very particular to learn God’s truth, and carefully reads the Scriptures to know what God’s word teaches concerning what we teach. She does not think it right to do a thing merely because it is the rule of the church. While she is a firm believer in God’s truth as she sees it, she has a most charitable heart for all those who differ with her. Some time ago I suggested to her the importance of becoming a teacher in our Sunday-school. She assured me that as soon as she believed God called her to this work she would cheerfully respond.”

“Pastor,” exclaimed the delighted Superintendent, “this certainly is joyful news for me. Why was it that I never thought of Sister Esther Forney in connection with teaching in this Sunday-school? My thought of her was ‘what a noble woman she would be to become the wife of a missionary to India.’ O, pastor, you have no idea what a heavy burden you have lifted from my soul. I feel now that there is hope for the salvation of Class Number 10.”

"Brother Sigler," solemnly began the pastor, "While this is joyful new to you, I fear there is danger that you may place too much confidence in her and let go your dependence on the Holy Spirit. Sister Forney, by the grace of God, may be the instrument in God's hand to do great things for Class Number 10. We believe we have the right teacher for the right class, yet let us not forget that God's Holy Spirit must be back of it, otherwise all is a failure."

"Thank you, pastor," replied the Superintendent, "I fear, at times, that in my zeal I look too much at signs and outlooks and not enough on God's help."

"True, my brother," the pastor suggested. "This is too often the case. Under no circumstances can we leave God out of our actions and undertakings. We read in God's word that we are to 'Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.' Suppose we shall have another short time of prayer, asking our blessed Savior to open our way in this case and prepare Sister Forney to consent to teach this class."

For a brief time both engaged in silent prayer and then in two softly audible prayers. As they arose, the Superintendent heard the clock striking eleven. "Brother Hoover," said the Superintendent, "Eleven o'clock. Is it possible. Have I been here nearly two hours? These have been the most blessed hours I experienced for years. I shall now make a confession, which I feel is due to you. Ever since I have been chosen Superintendent of this school, nearly five years ago, I always conceited that I was able to conduct a Sunday-school without either consulting my pastor or permitting

him to dictate to me. I now discover my folly and error. Pastor, I truly feel penitent for my false notion, and humbly beg you from now on to feel that you and I, by the grace of God, shall work together for the best interest of the school and the glory of God. Pardon me if at any time you felt that I have slighted you."

"O, never mind, dear brother," the pastor interrupted him. "You can rest assured I shall always assist you whenever you need me. You, by His help, have conducted the school admirably. I feel greatly encouraged to learn that you have the salvation of souls burdening your heart. This is a hopeful sign that God's Holy Spirit is reviving the school and church, and under His guidance we certainly can look for a gracious work of salvation in our school. May God grant it."

"Amen! Amen!" cried the Superintendent.

Before the two parted that memorable Saturday night, it was agreed that each should make specific prayer between then and Lord's day after the close of the Sunday-school session when they would hold a consultation with Esther Forney.

On the same Saturday evening Sister Esther Forney was sitting in her cozy corner in her room reading in the Acts concerning the conversion of Paul. When she read Paul's exclamation to the voice from heaven, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" a feeling came over her to do something to please her Savior. She exclaimed quite loudly, "And Lord Jesus, what wilt thou have me to do?" Her soul became overwhelmed with a great desire to be of service. While musing she picked up a Sunday-school book of hymns, and happened to open at the hymn beginning with "I gave my life for thee." Softly

she sung until she reached "What hast thou given to me," when a flood of tears filled her eyes and a sense of ingratitude her heart, and she exclaimed, "Blessed Jesus, what hast thou for me to do?"

"Wait, my child, a call will come," seemed to fill her thoughts. She then prayed for guidance and wisdom.

The following day, after the close of the Sunday-school she noticed her pastor and Superintendent conversing, and one of them looking towards her. She was in the act of moving toward the door when the Superintendent asked a boy to "Please ask Esther Forney to come to us."

"Miss Esther! Miss Esther!" cried the boy as he reached her side, "Mr. Sigler wishes to see you."

"Thanks," she exclaimed, "I'll be there in a moment."

CHAPTER II.

CLASS No. 10 AND ITS ROYAL TEACHER.

Asking her companion to wait on her, she walked up to the two interested men, when Mr. Sigler informed her that Class No. 10 had been without a regular teacher for quite a time, and that something ought to be done to secure one. "Last evening," he said, "I called on our pastor and made known to him how greatly perplexed I was regarding the class. Together we prayed, when he informed me that he knew one who is eminently fitted for the class, and then named you. Sister Forney, it seems that the Lord is in this movement. I now wish to ask you, by the approval of our pastor, to consent to teach that class; and may the grace of Jesus Christ ever aid you. Will you consent, and on next Lord's day assume your position?"

For at least a minute she steadfastly looked toward the floor. The event of last evening flashed through her mind. "Can it be," she thought, "that the Master has need of me so soon? Is this my splendid opportunity to show my love for him who died for me?" Then in silent prayer she said, "Jesus, is it thy will?" The next moment she turned her cheerful face toward pastor and Superintendent and exclaimed, "By the grace of my Savior I will. Please support me by your prayers."

This they cheerfully agreed to do. And as she left them to join her companion, she heard them say, "God bless you, Esther, the Royal Teacher." "Esther, the Royal Teacher." These words rang and rang repeatedly

in her ears. "Why did they call me such? What does it mean? I, poor, unworthy Esther, to be called the Royal Teacher. They surely have a too exalted opinion of me. But by His grace I shall do my best." The more she thought on these words the more she felt its import and weight of responsibility. "I shall, at least, try to merit that title, but much rather hear my Master say, 'she has done the best she could.' Class Number 10. I am responsible to my Savior for this class."

Her first desire was to become acquainted with each member of the class; to inquire into their dispositions; to learn of their habits, and their abilities. She had some knowledge of the class and that it consisted of five promising girls of twelve years and upwards, and of varied dispositions.

It had been the intention of Mr. Sigler not to make public the name of the permanent teacher of Class No. 10 before the next session; but several of the girls became restless and thought of leaving the school. On hearing of this he called on a member of the class and said, "We have found a Royal Teacher for your class. All be in your seats next Lord's day when I shall make you acquainted."

"O, dear Superintendent, do please tell me who she is," begged the pupil. "Will we like her? Is she pretty? Can she tell nice stories? Does she dress stylish? Does she read the latest magazines? Do please tell me."

"I really ought not to tell you, but I think I will do this." He assured her, "I will have your class to meet at my home on Thursday evening to tea, the guests of Mrs. Sigler and myself."

"O, Mr. Sigler, that will be just too grand for anything. Will our new teacher be there also? I hope she will," the girl asked.

"Certainly, my child, if it is possible for her to be present. Please invite the class, and I shall invite your Royal Teacher."

That day, long before the Winter sun sank behind the snow-covered hills, every member of the class was on tip-toe of expectation and desired to meet their new teacher.

Such a guessing time. One guessed one person, another quite a different person, and such a wondering—some wondered how she looked, or dressed, or talked, or whether she was pretty, or just as other ordinary teachers, or ugly as blue mud. "I just wonder how she puts up her hair," exclaimed one. "Why didn't you ask everything imaginable about her?"

"I did," the girl replied. "He simply said, 'Wait until Thursday evening. Come and you will become acquainted.' So, girls, all we can do is to wait."

The Superintendent informed Esther of the appointment for Thursday evening, and requested her to be present unless unavoidably detained.

"God permitting, I'll be there," she assured him. It was agreed, for a purpose, that she should arrive a short time after the class arrived.

Thursday came, and so did five hopeful, cheerful, jovial girls. They had arrived somewhat before the time appointed, and were greeted very courteously by both the Superintendent and his wife.

"Has our Royal Teacher arrived? How soon will she be here? O, Mrs. Sigler, do please tell us who she is." But she could not, for she did not know.

"Now, girls, let us all be seated in my library," Mr. Sigler suggested. "I think your new teacher will arrive on the next trolley car." The car was due in five minutes. With eager, attentive ears the girls listened to every sound.

"Ah! there it comes," cried one, "I think it will stop." Yes it stopped. Mr. Sigler slowly walked down stairs and toward the door. A moment later, "whir, urr, urr," rang the electric bell. O, how the girls jumped and became fidgety.

Quietly Mr. Sigler ushered Esther Forney into the sitting room, where she met Mrs. Sigler. After removing her wraps she was escorted to the library, where Mr. Sigler exclaimed, "Members of Class No. 10, it gives me great pleasure to introduce Miss Esther Forney, the Royal Teacher," and then he continued, "Miss Esther, this is Dorothy Behney, and this Kate Hoverter, this Eleanor Schaner, this Agnes Stover and this little one is Irene Snyder. I trust you will now try to improve your acquaintanceship and together seek one another's best welfare."

Several of the girls had known Esther real well. One of these exclaimed with surprise, "O, Miss Esther, I never could have guessed you to be our teacher. I thought you ought to be the wife of a preacher, or a missionary, but I am real glad that you are willing to take us poor little heathen at home under your care."

A delightful evening was spent and a little planning was done for the future good of the class. They actually organized with a President and other officers. Each member held an office. That evening, when the girls returned home, each one felt that Esther was the Royal Teacher in reality.

Esther that evening realized that she had a task on hand, a responsibility and an opportunity which meant praying, studying and tactful teaching and correct living. To teach the lesson week following week was no easy task; but how to teach and act so as to win them to their Savior was the supreme question that began to press upon her soul. She relied strongly on the help from God and often she prayed for grace and wisdom.

On the first day as she appeared before her class she acted carefully; the lesson was taught in such a manner as to interest her class, yet it seemed that her heart was not in the lesson. She did not seek to make any great impression. In her soul was concealed a purpose, which it was not wise to reveal. It was to win their souls to Christ and teach them his holy will. In order to do this she needed to study the disposition and temperament of each girl. She was anxious to know the real heart of each one in order to apply her teaching so as to make the best and lasting impression.

It did not take this wise and tactful teacher long to gain a fairly good idea of each girl. There were five girls and each so unlike the other as so many potatoes. There was Dorothy, a quiet, meditative girl who almost counted each word she spoke; then she had Kate, a restless, giggling, mischievous girl, who, doing her very best, could not keep quiet two seconds; there was Eleanor, very inquisitive. She asked more questions than the other four in a bunch; the next girl was Agnes, a real studious girl, who always searched to know whether what was said was really true; and last, and in size the least, was Irene. She was a willing learner, but slow to understand.

Having studied these different dispositions, this Royal

Teacher next endeavored to learn of the home life of each pupil. She knew that the parents of several of the girls professed to be Christians. It was to know the real home life of each she was bent on to learn. Having this object in her mind she visited each pupil. The first home she called at was Irene Snyder's. "Dear little Irene," she thought after being in her home less than fifteen minutes. The mother was a widow, with several children of which Irene was the eldest. Much of the household duties fell on her. Her attendance in the public school was irregular. She, however, was very anxious to learn, yet as she said, "Studying goes so very hard; it seems I cannot think."

Here the Royal Teacher quickly won the heart of the mother and her children. Irene was warmly drawn toward her new teacher, and the teacher's sympathy at once was made known. In this home little was known about Christ's great love.

From her handbag the teacher drew a small Bible and read several adapted passages, and for a little while talked about the love of God.

"Miss Forney," exclaimed Mrs. Snyder, "If God loves me, why have I to struggle so hard to raise my family?"

"God moves in a mysterious way," the teacher began. "There are some things hard to understand, yet often it is for a purpose. Yet I know of persons who are far worse situated than you; but much of it was their own doing. In your case, it is one which may happen to any. The Scriptures tell us 'That all things work together for good to them who love the Lord.' Certainly you love Jesus, don't you?"

"Sorry, I do not," sadly replied Mrs. Snyder.

Miss Forney then spoke of the love of God, and how

he gave his only begotten Son, who suffered on the cross and died in our stead, so that whosoever believes in him should have everlasting life.

Noticing that Irene was an attentive listener, she gently turned toward her and asked, "Irene, do you love Jesus?"

"How can I love him," Irene lowly replied. "I didn't know that he loved me before you told me. When our other teachers said something about Jesus they always looked at the other girls, because they were better dressed than I was. I didn't think that Jesus cared much for the poor people." Then Irene began to cry. Esther drew her to her side and with gentle words consoled her. "Bless your little heart, Irene, Jesus loves you just as much as he loves the greatest and richest woman in the world." With these words, and words of instruction, the teacher left a happy impression for good.

When she was ready to leave, the entire little family followed her to the door, mother and Irene still softly weeping. "O! Miss Esther, can't you tell us more of Jesus' love," begged Irene. There, near the door, stood the teacher and before her two anxious inquirers wishing to learn more about the love of God. Offering to God a sigh of prayer for guidance and power, she turned back and walked into the little dining room and for a little season she read in the gospel, talked a little and then knelt and prayed for the fatherless family.

The time was rapidly passing, yet it was a time graciously spent. After urging mother and daughter to look to Jesus for salvation and to trust in him, she left.

"I think," she mused, "I will call to see Eleanor Schaner." She knew her parents, who were both members of the same church. They were concerned in

her salvation. Eleanor was in many respects a good girl, yet it seems it was impossible to induce her to think either about her body or soul's interest. Her father used to say, "Eleanor is like a person riding on the fast express train. 'Things fly past too rapidly.' It would be a telegraph pole, a tree, a telegraph pole, a tree, a house, a pole, etc."

With Eleanor it was a regular rattle-box of rattle things attached to a rattle tongue. The teacher knew about Eleanor's inquisitive habit, or habit of asking trifling questions. She had prepared her mind to get ahead of Eleanor by questioning her. She had in her mind about a dozen questions which she intended to ask the girl.

"Ting-a-ling! ling!" sounded the door-bell. Quickly Eleanor ran to the door and opened it. "Good evening," exclaimed the teacher. "Are you well? How is mother? How is—

"O! Miss Forney," Eleanor started in, "Where did you get that brown ribbon? What did you pay for it? Was it a Christmas present?"

CHAPTER III.

GETTING IN TOUCH WITH HER CLASS.

“Yes! no! yes! no! a thousand times,” replied the baffled teacher. “But have you heard about Lydia, the purple seller of the City of Thyatira?”

“No, indeed, I have not,” Eleanor quickly replied. “Is she dead? Did thieves steal her purple? What purple?”

The tactful teacher kept perfectly mum, and walked towards the sewing room where Mrs. Schaner did some mending.

Between these two was held for eight or ten minutes a continuous conversation, heedless of Eleanor’s rapid firing questions about Lydia. The girl grew restless waiting to hear about “that Lydia.”

“Please, Miss Esther, do tell me all about that woman, won’t you?”

“I shall, my dear Chatterbox, if you will keep as quiet as a pine needle.”

Esther promised.

“A pine needle. What is a pine needle?” Eleanor asked.

“Please, Eleanor, listen. Which do you wish to know? About the pine needle, or Lydia?” asked Esther.

“Both,” Eleanor quickly replied.

“Only one at a time. I will talk to your mother until you have decided,” Esther said, and then turned to converse with Mrs. Schaner. For a wonder Eleanor was in a deep study for a moment, and then exclaimed: “Tell me about Lydia.”

"I shall, but you must not interrupt me," replied Esther.

"I'll try my best not to, even if I must bite my tongue," Eleanor assured her.

Esther related what she knew concerning this splendid, prominent woman, merchant of purple; and laid special stress on how she attended to the preaching of the great Apostle Paul. During more than ten minutes Eleanor Schaner was an attentive listener. Once only, did she interrupt Esther with, "What were the things she attended to?"

This gave Esther an open door to her scholar's attention, and aided her to tell of the wondrous love of Jesus. Esther began to realize that she had gained some influence over the girl. Eleanor was less inclined to ask so many senseless questions, and became more serious.

Following a short talk, Esther prepared to leave for her home.

"Eleanor," exclaimed Esther, "how would you like to be as Lydia?"

"Very much, Miss Esther, but I couldn't. I wish I was as good as she was." Seriously she replied, "Why was she baptized?"

"My dear girl," Esther exclaimed, "the important question is how to get right with God, and have a new heart and a right spirit. Create in you a new heart. He loved you so greatly that he gave Jesus to redeem you. I will give you a verse; memorize it and believe it. It is John iii: 16. It is getting late, and I must hasten home. Your dear mother and I, before we retire, will pray for your salvation. Won't we, Mrs. Schaner?"

"Certainly I will," her mother replied, as warm tears beclouded her eyes. "Not a day for a long time has passed without I pray for Eleanor."

Esther departed for home. After attending to several domestic duties she went to her cozy corner in her room, and quietly reviewed the work of the evening, and asked God's blessing on it. She earnestly prayed for the Snyder family and for Eleanor, and for guidance when visiting the remaining three girls.

Dorothy Behney could be visited during an afternoon, but the other two girls could be found at home usually in the evening.

All forenoon, next day Miss Esther Forney was busily engaged assisting her mother in home duties which were many; yet, by some diligence, she found time to make a short call in the afternoon at the home of Dorothy.

It was shortly after the middle of the afternoon when Esther stood on the porch of Dorothy's charming home, and was reaching to press the button of the electric bell when Dorothy sprang up the steps and called, "O! Miss Esther, I am very glad you came to see us. Our little brother is very sick. I fear he will die. O! I am so sad. I was wishing you would come. Just wait a moment, I will hurry and run back in the side entrance and let you in by this door." And away she hurried, and quickly Esther entered and soon was in the sick room.

Dorothy's parents professed to be Christians, but of the easy sort, or such as worshiped as it was convenient. To-day Mrs. Behney was unusually solemn, for she also feared that little Bennie would never get well. "The doctor shook his head very queerly when he felt Bennie's pulse and examined his little tongue," said Mrs. Behney in a low tone.

Miss Forney looked a moment at little Bennie, and then with a sweet smile on her face, exclaimed to the child, "Is dear little Bennie sick? Bennie will soon get

well." Then laying her hand gently on his forehead, continued to talk: "Bennie is a good little boy; we want him in our Sunday-school. Hurry, Bennie, get well." As she withdrew her hand the sick boy reached up as if to grasp her hand and draw it back.

Leaning forward she asked, "What does Bennie want?"

"Oo hans feel good on Bennie's head. It is cold; put han on agin."

Again she laid her cool hand on his forehead, when Bennie exclaimed, "Feel good; feel good."

"The child has a fever," she said. "A cool cloth will help him."

A cool cloth was laid on his forehead, when Bennie again said, "Feel good!" Meanwhile Dorothy stood nearby as quiet as a statue, meditating.

A little later Bennie fell asleep; the first in twenty-four hours. Quietly Esther moved into another room and beckoned Dorothy and her mother to let Bennie rest, and they came to where she was. Here she had an opportunity to have a heart-to-heart talk with Mrs. Behney concerning her own spiritual condition, and the need to be right with God if we desire his grace in time of need. Meanwhile Dorothy was as silent as a stone, apparently in deep and serious thoughts.

"Come to my side, my quiet little girl; you have nothing to say. I wonder what your thoughts are," remarked Esther. "Do tell me."

"I was thinking," she replied, "about Bennie should he die. Would I ever meet him in heaven? Then I wondered how you can be such a good Christian, and what I must do to be good and do good."

"I don't think that Bennie will die soon. He may live to be a man," Esther assured her. "If you wish to

be good, you need to be born again, as Jesus said to Nicodemus. He will give you a new heart. You need to look to Jesus, who died on the cross for all your sins."

For a short time Esther preached a little sermon that fitted both mother and daughter.

"Really, I must go, as mother has her hands crowded with work," remarked Esther, "I will call again to see Bennie. I hope he will be well enough so that you can be in your class next Lord's day. Please do not worry about Bennie; he will recover. But think about your own souls. Jesus is willing and able to save you all."

"O! dear Miss Forney, I wish I had that peace in my soul, I believe is in your soul," exclaimed Mrs. Behney as fresh tears began to flow.

"Dear sister, it is yours to have. All you need is a little more faith in Jesus. You remember reading in Romans v: 1," replied Esther.

"Sorry to say I don't. Will you please tell it?" begged Mrs. Behney.

"It says," answered Esther, "'Therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.'"

"Is that in the Bible? That is blessed news to me," exclaimed Mrs. Behney.

"It is, thank God," replied Esther. "Believe in Jesus and you will have this blessed peace. It is peace with God and peace in your soul. But I actually need to hurry home."

Scarcely had Esther left the house when Bennie opened his eyes, and exclaimed: "Is that good lady not here? Is she an angel? Bennie feels better. Will go to Sunday-school. More cold things on my head. It's good, it's good." Then he fell asleep again.

That evening when the doctor called, he exclaimed, "The child has made a remarkable change for the better. Much better than I expected. I cannot account for it." Bennie opened his eyes and said, "Good angel lady here, and put her hands on Bennie's head, and Bennie got better."

When Esther returned home she found plenty to do. For several hours she could not spend a season in prayer and meditation; yet while at work she prayed that God would bless Bennie's illness to winning the Behney family closer to Christ and Dorothy to accept him as her Savior.

It seemed that Esther became more and more deeply impressed with the importance of winning her class to Christ, and to win them at once. They had arrived at the critical age of young womanhood. It depended greatly on what their next decision would be whether for Christ and his church, or for the world, sin and a hopeless future. *Now* was the time to be fixed in purpose. It was *now*, or perhaps never. "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation," forced itself upon her soul. And, "whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might," continued to ring in her ears. Knowing that that evening of the week she was free to make calls, decided, tired as she was, and weather very unpleasant, to visit that evening the remaining two girls of her class.

As she was preparing to leave home, her mother asked: "Esther, don't you think that the weather is too disagreeable for you to venture out?"

"Yes, mother, I know it is," replied Esther, "yet I feel as if I need to go, as it may be my last opportunity before the evangelistic services, which will be held next week. I will dress warmly and wear my stout overshoes."

On leaving her warm, comfortable home, and stepping on to the pavement, a fierce blast of wind struck her, while the fleeting snow almost blinded her. A gloomy feeling came over her; and something seemed to say, "O, foolish Esther; O, foolish Esther. It is not fit for a sailor to be out, much less a frail woman. Go back; you are silly to endanger your health for two girls." She was inclined to return; then she thought of what Paul said: "The love of Christ constraineth us," and forward she went, brave and cheerful. She directed her steps toward the home of Kate Hoverter, which was the farthest to go. "Wirr, wirr, wirr," rang the electric bell. "I just wonder who that silly goose is out in such a storm," cried Kate, loud enough for Miss Forney to hear. "Ah! that is the thanks you get for your heroism," came to her mind. "Jesus came not for thanks, but for service," came a gentle thought, for her comfort.

"Ho! ho! ha! ha! goodness graciousness, Miss Esther, what brought you out this awful, disagreeable evening?" cried Kate, while giggling and fussing.

"I came to see you. I just felt I ought to come, so I came," calmly replied Esther, although she felt that her visit was useless.

She was taken back into the dining-room where the family sat around a table reading and playing games. The folks all were pleased that Kate's teacher had called to see her. For a short time she joined with the older folks discussing the news of the day, and then began to inquire concerning church work.

"We attend church services at the Duke Street church, and all our children go to Sunday-school except Kate; she is too fidgety to remain at one place long enough to get her nerves settled. She, during the last three

months, has been going to the Green Street Church of God Sunday-school. I guess soon she will flit to some other school. Maybe not, for I heard her say that 'we have a just too grand for anything teacher.' Possibly you can hold her. I hope so at any rate."

Miss Esther said some good words about Kate, such as, "Kate is all right. She must explode some of her surplus energy, or die, and we don't want her to die so young. God may have great work for her."

Time had arrived for Esther to leave, and bidding the family good evening she asked Kate for a moment of quiet talk. Kate went with Esther to the door. Here Esther told her how she was interested in her soul's salvation, and that Jesus loved her, and needed her services. "Kate," she added, "are you concerned about your soul? I hope, my darling girl, you are."

Kate giggled a little, and then exclaimed: "Yes, I am. I wish I was a Christian like you. I wish I was good, but I am so full of mischief, I couldn't keep quiet half a second. I simply must giggle or die."

CHAPTER IV.

WINNING CLASS No. 10 FOR CHRIST.

"O! don't worry about that, you won't die so easily," consolingly replied Esther, the royal teacher. "By and by you will overcome it, and become a quiet girl, possibly as calm as a sleeping babe."

"Miss Esther," hopefully cried Kate, "do you think I will? O! won't I be happy then! Then they will not call me 'Giggling Kate' and all such disagreeable names."

"Certainly, Katie, by the grace of Jesus, if you trust Him," answered Esther. "Jesus loves you, and He will help you. But if you expect His love and grace you need to be saved by His precious blood. Katie, my dear girl, when I reach home I will pray for you. I want you to pray also."

It was urgent that Esther should leave in order to visit the fifth girl in her class. After kissing Kate an affectionate good-night, she once again ventured into the stormy, snowy weather. Once she thought to go direct home and call on Agnes Stover at some other time. Yet she heard the wind singing, "Now! now! now! on! on! whiste-est." "Yes, now!" she exclaimed.

Ahring, ring! ahring, ring, rang the bell as Esther turned the handle. Mr. Stover who for a wonder, stayed at home that evening, answered the bell, and cordially greeted Miss Forney, when she informed him that she was Agnes' Sunday-school teacher. "Glad to meet you, Miss Forney," he remarked. "Agnes has been telling us about you. Come back into the sitting-room where it is quite comfortable."

Esther entered and quickly removed her heavy wraps, and then stepped to Agnes' side and gently laid her hands on her head and began to question her regarding a concordance she was consulting. "What is my industrious girl studying now?" she asked.

"O, I heard some one say that the 'Peace of God passeth all understanding,'" Agnes replied. "And I am searching the Bible to learn what it means and how to get it. I am very glad you came, as I have been wishing for you to come almost ever since last Sunday. I know what 'peace' means, but there is a peace which passeth all understanding. It must be wonderful. Please tell me something about it."

"I certainly will, if God helps me," the royal teacher assured her. "Let me think a moment. Yes, it is in Philippians iv: 7. 'And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' And then in Romans v: 1, we read, 'Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.' You see my dear, how simple the word of God is."

By this time Agnes' parents became interested in the conversation; and were attentive listeners. Esther carefully proclaimed Jesus as the Prince of Peace, and the importance of accepting him as the Author of our peace and salvation.

It was growing late and the storm raging in its fury. The teacher announced that she must hasten home. After inviting Agnes' parents to attend the evangelistic services, she drew her pupil to her side and said, "Agnes will see me to the door." At the door she said, "Agnes, this peace of God is yours, if you will trust him for it. I will pray for you;" then pressing a kiss on her forehead, she left for an encounter with the storm and for home.

As Agnes stood at the door looking after her teacher while battling with the drifting snow, she became greatly impressed with her earnestness. On returning to her parents she exclaimed: "No one, but she who has the peace of God in her heart, would have ventured out on such a night to visit a Sunday-school pupil. Why she just waded through the snow drift and against the fleeting flakes as if her soul was in perfect peace."

"No doubt," replied her father, "she has peace in her soul, as she read in Isaiah: 'Thou wilt keep him (her in this case) in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee.' It certainly is a blessing to enjoy such a peace."

"Yes, father," Agnes exclaimed, "Esther said 'we can have this peace if we trust in God.'"

That night the Stover family retired with thoughts on a subject which never before so impressed them, although both parents were church members.

When Esther reached her home she looked more like a snowman than a human being. Some one in her home assisted her to remove the snow and relieve her of her warm coat and overshoes.

"Are you not half frozen, my darling Esther?" exclaimed her mother.

"No, I am not, mother dear, I feel as comfortable as our Tabby on that rug," replied Esther. "I scarcely thought about the weather, for my soul was singing for joy, when I felt that by Jesus' help some good had been accomplished. I believe that God has heard my prayer and is preparing the hearts of my girls."

The heroism and devotion of Esther as exhibited that stormy night began to show themselves.

"Surely," exclaimed Agnes Stover's mother, after

Esther had departed, "your teacher is deeply interested in Agnes' soul. I feel grieved because of my own negligence. I trust Agnes will be also interested in her own welfare."

Agnes was interested and so was her father. The following Lord's day, the first time for many months, he went to church and was a serious, attentive listener.

From that evening forward Agnes' mind and soul were moved with the one great thought—"peace." Carefully she looked up the reference about peace. In her diligent search she turned to the prophecy of Isaiah. Here she said: "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." This she found at ten places in Isaiah. This troubled her greatly. Then the thought came, "I am not a wicked girl. I never did anything real sinful." A gentle spirit said, "Yet, Agnes, don't you think it is sinful not to trust and love Jesus? Even if you don't do any thing that is sinful, you know that you ought to believe in Jesus and love him."

"But, I think I do love Jesus," she mused.

"If you love me keep my commandments," came vividly to her mind. Quickly she turned to her concordance, and her eyes fell on I John iii. 23: "This is his commandment, that ye believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ."

"O Jesus!" she exclaimed, "don't I read thy word? Don't I try to keep Sunday rigidly? Don't I obey my parents?"

"Good, my child," came a thought, "but whatsoever is not of faith is sin." And, "If you say that you have no sin, you deceive yourself and the truth is not in you." While reflecting on this she opened the New Testament at I John i. 8-10, and read it. Warm tears gathered in Agnes' eyes as she felt herself a guilty sinner before God.

"O Jesus!" she cried, "I do now confess that I am a sinner before thee. Pardon my soul and wash all my sins away with thy own precious blood. O, my blessed Savior, grant me that wonderful peace which I can have with God through thy holy name."

That night, Agnes Stover found that peace of God which passes all understanding.

Before the following Lord's day, Agnes hastened to the home of her royal teacher, and with a joyful heart informed Esther of, "How happy my soul is in Jesus."

"Praise the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name," Esther exclaimed.

This indeed was a happy meeting for both.

"Now, Agnes," exclaimed Esther, "we shall unite our efforts and prayers for the salvation of our class."

The evangelistic services which were conducted by Pastor Charles Hoover were in progress, and a number of persons old and young had found the peace of God in their souls. Esther, while taking part in winning souls in a general way was specially concerned for Class No. 10. At a testimonial service held just before the preaching services a goodly number arose and confessed Christ as their Savior. Agnes was one of the number. Strange as it may seem, all the girls of Class No. 10 were present. Each one was deeply impressed with her experience. Before she sat down she turned toward the four girls and exclaimed, "Irene, Kate, Eleanor and Dorothy, I am praying for you."

This made a visibly deep impression on all except Kate. She sort of giggled and nervously moved about.

That evening Pastor Hoover, being full of divine power, preached a convincing sermon on "Christ died for us." He pressed on his audience the sin of rejecting

Christ, and the loss of those who reject him. The pastor then gave an earnest invitation for the unsaved souls to come forward and kneel at the altar rail or at a bench near by. A number accepted the invitation.

Miss Esther felt seriously impressed to personally talk to the four unsaved girls. The first one she approached was Kate Hoverter. "Kate, my dear girl," she began, "How is it this evening with your soul? Jesus loves you, for he died to save you. Can you believe in him as your own personal Savior?"

"Miss Esther, can't I be saved without going to that bench or altar rail? I very much wish I was saved. But if I go forward they will say, 'There goes Giggling Kate,' and just say nasty things about me."

"Anywhere you call on Jesus and trust your salvation to him and believe he died for your sin, and surrender to his will, you will be saved."

"The going forward is a convenience. Thousands have availed themselves of the opportunity and were happily saved. Thousands were led to Christ in inquiry rooms and are now consecrated Christians. Some, like Agnes Stover, have found the peace of God in their homes."

"Let me advise you, my dear girl, never let prejudice, nor notions govern your actions. Whenever you are real sick of your sins, and sincerely desire to be saved you will not let place, nor person, nor time hinder you.

"Jesus says, 'Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' What is required of you is to come to Jesus Christ. Come in spirit and in truth, and you will find rest for your soul. Jesus came all the way from heaven to Calvary, and the sinner must also come to Calvary. Christ came to suffer and

die to save the lost sinner. In order to be saved, the lost sinner must meet Christ at the cross. It is a life for a look, by faith, at the Crucified One."

While Kate was deeply distressed on account of her sin, she hesitated and asked to be permitted to think, and, actually, to pray.

It required only a few words of encouragement to induce Eleanor Schaner to arise and calmly walk forward to the altar railing and kneel there. Her parents were members of the church of God at Green Street, and her mother had been praying for months for her daughter.

Ever since Esther related the story of Lydia, the purple seller, Eleanor had a desire to be a Christian like Lydia.

While kneeling, Eleanor wept and prayed. Her mother with joyful hope in her heart knelt beside her daughter, and pointed her to Jesus who paid on the cross the ransom price for her salvation.

Meanwhile Esther the royal teacher gave her attention to Dorothy Behney and Irene Snyder.

"My dear girls," Esther began, "God has been good to you."

CHAPTER V.

CLASS NO. 10 WON AND INSTRUCTED IN HOLY LIVING.

"He has restored Dorothy's little brother, Bennie, to health and strength. Has he not?"

"Indeed he has," Dorothy cheerfully replied.

"God has blessed your mother and you, dear Irene," Esther, the Royal Teacher, asserted. "God loves your souls, and he now invites you to come to Jesus for pardon and salvation. Will you come?"

Dorothy Behney, who had been concerned for her soul ever since Bennie lay sick and in danger of dying, exclaimed, "I will," and with Esther her teacher, by her side, walked forward to the side where Eleanor Schaner knelt.

This made a vivid impression on the minds of the two girls. Both began to sob.

"O! Irene," cried Kate Hoverter, "what shall we do to be saved? We two are left. Ain't it too sad? There is Agnes Stover, a Christian, and now Eleanor and Dorothy went forward and we are left. I wish I was a Christian."

"So do I; indeed I do," solemnly replied Irene. "I want to be one to-night yet."

A little later, Miss Esther, noticing that the two girls were serious, went to them and exclaimed, "Girls, have you decided for Jesus and everlasting life? or for sin and eternal death? Jesus gave his blood for your ransom. Will you be saved?"

The two girls were now halting between two purposes. It was now or perhaps never.

The royal, tactful teacher asked, "Will you go with me to our class room for a little talk with Jesus?"

"We will," both replied.

The teacher quickly called on one of the church officials to turn on the light in her class-room, and a few minutes later she and the two girls were kneeling side by side in the quiet class-room.

Paul and Silas were scarcely more ready to answer the Philippian jailor the question, "What must I do to be saved?" than Esther Forney was to tell these two silent inquirers to "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ."

That evening two claimed to have found pardon by faith in the Son of God. These were Eleanor Schaner who went forward to the altar railing, and Irene Snyder, who found peace to her soul in the quietness of the class-room.

The tactful teacher asked the pastor and superintendent to visit her class. Here they found the Royal Teacher surrounded by her class of five girls—three rejoicing in their salvation through the blood of God's dear Son and two inquiring for the way of salvation.

"This is a scene worthy the attention of the angels of God," exclaimed the elated Superintendent Sigler.

"Truly! truly! it is," replied Pastor Hoover.

After speaking words of encouragement to the three new converts, and consolation to the two inquirers, the little group dismissed with the hope of meeting on the following evening.

The Green Street church and Sunday-school were in earnest. And the report that Class Number 10 was moved by the Holy Spirit; and how God is blessing the personal efforts of Esther, the Royal Teacher, awoke other teachers to the sense of their opportunity to win their classes to the Savior.

Meanwhile Esther and the saved three prayed for Kate and Dorothy.

It was on the third Tuesday of the New Year when the church bell rung a welcome invitation to all to come to the evangelistic services. To Kate and Dorothy, never had a church bell ringing such a charm, such a warm welcome as it had that evening. Dorothy's thought was on the blessed moment when she could kneel at the altar railing, while Kate was meditating on having "a little talk with Jesus" in the class-room.

That evening the large audience-room was crowded and the members of Class Number 10 sat scattered in the room. Kate and Dorothy sat far apart.

The sermon by Pastor Hoover was on the importance of faith in Christ as our only Savior. He urged the need of a quick decision, and then followed with a fervent invitation to come to Jesus. Persons all over the room arose and went forward. Kate looked about to see Dorothy. She saw her as she calmly walked up the center isle and knelt at the chancel railing.

"O! how I wish I could follow Dorothy," Kate thought. Then she looked toward her class-room. There all was dark. "Can't I be saved without going forward?" she mused. "The room is dark. O! what shall I do to be saved?"

"Go forward," something whispered.

"O, I can't! I can't!" she again mused.

"Why do you hesitate? If you want to be saved arise and come to Jesus. Are you anxious to be saved?" came ringing in her mind.

"O Jesus help me!" she cried, and the next moment Kate was on her feet and pressing her way forward. She had gone within eight or ten steps of the railing when her courage failed her, and she was in the act of turning

to a vacant seat when a gentle voice exclaimed, "God bless you, Katie. Come this way. Here is a place to kneel." Receiving fresh inspiration, Kate quickly advanced to the vacant place and knelt there.

"Dear Katie, thank God that he aided you to take this noble stand this night." Then Katie realized that her Royal Teacher was by her side.

That night before the services ended Dorothy and Kate were rejoicing in the knowledge of their salvation in Jesus.

Esther gathered her redeemed, blood-washed class in a corner of the room, and together with her five girls rejoiced. She gave each one a word of counsel and encouragement, and suggested the helpfulness of mutual sympathy and services.

While resting in her room that night, Esther meditated on the blessed results of personal effort and confidence in God. Greatly encouraged was she that God had a work for her to do, and that he had owned and blessed her efforts in the salvation of Class Number 10.

Esther, the Royal Teacher, truly had great cause for rejoicing. It was a holy joy, full of praise and gratitude to God. Following this season of joy she engaged in prayer for the strengthening and upbuilding of the saved girls. While meditating on these things she thought of each girl separately, of each's disposition and home advantages. She felt that she need to talk and deal with Kate differently than with either Dorothy or Irene, and that she need to approach Agnes with "thus saith the Lord," while she must be prompt to answer Eleanor's questions. Then she prayed for divine guidance, and then exclaimed, "Lord, what can I do?"

"Feed my lambs," flashed as a vision before her.

"What shall I feed them?" she replied.

"Feed them my word. 'As new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby.' My truth is what will build them up," appeared as a vision before her.

"I see," she reflected. "It is my opportunity to tenderly care for them, and nourish them as the nursery man does his young fruit trees. They are inexperienced and unlearned in God's word. It is for me to assist them, to encourage, to instruct, and thus develop Christian character, or holy living.

"Along with my pastor and superintendent, I must be as a gentle shepherd to Class Number 10; and may Jesus my Chief Shepherd ever guide me aright by his gracious Holy Spirit."

It was less than a week later when one of her class came to her with a sad tale. "O! Miss Esther," she cried, "yesterday some girls called me names, and one called to the other, saying, 'I wonder if giggling Kate can twist her face to giggle since she has put on a sanctimonious face?' It made me angry and I said, 'O, you foolish girls; go to grass and you will know.' O, dear teacher, I fear I have lost my hold on Jesus."

"May Jesus bless your honest soul," Esther quickly replied. "You were only overtaken and made a misstep. Tell Jesus about it. Suppose you fall on the icy pavement, how long would you lie there?"

"O! my, not a second. I would get up just as quickly as I could," replied Kate with a smile.

"Just so, when you slip, or even fall; get up at once," said Esther. "Always look to Jesus. When the disciples were in distress they called on Jesus, and he rescued them. It is a good thing for young Christians to read the Bible and pray much. We are instructed to watch and pray. Satan, our soul's enemy, as a roaring

lion goes about to devour us. Sometimes he comes as a subtle serpent, or an angel of light. Therefore we must be awake and watch."

Her experience with Kate impressed her with the idea to have a little talk with her class on the possibility of falling and what to do.

She had her class meet her in her home for tea and a pleasant chat. After tea they retired to Esther's room where she gave them a helpful talk on watching, and what to do should one slip. "Lately Kate came to me greatly distressed because she had made a mistake," Esther said, then asked, "Katie, did your little talk with Jesus make it right, all right?"

"Yes, Miss Esther, it did, and it also helped me to forgive those girls. I talked to them, and they said they were sorry that they had talked so ugly to me. O! girls, the grace of God is a most wonderful thing to help you to overcome troubles."

"Teacher," exclaimed one of the girls, "is there any danger of a Christian falling?"

"Babies or young children often fall," replied Esther. "Do you know why?" All exclaimed, "Because they are not careful."

"Just so, girls," the Royal Teacher replied. "As long as we are watchful there is little danger. In First Corinthians I read, 'Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.'"

"Yes! yes! I see," cried Dorothy. "It means such persons who are over-confident in themselves who are in danger of falling?"

"Exactly so," replied Esther.

"The best safeguard against falling is to study the blessed Bible, engage often in prayer and watch. And then go about doing good. Help others, for while

assisting others you are helping yourself. Always press forward. As long as a bicycle goes forward it will never fall."

"Miss Esther, is going about doing good simply to attend church services and prayer-meeting and Endeavor meetings and Sunday-school?" asked Eleanor. "The other day our next door neighbor wanted to go to the store, and she had no one to care for her three small children. She asked me whether I would stay with them until she returned. Last Summer she asked me, and I simply would not do it. I told my mother, I wish our neighbors would take care of their own kids. But this time I replied, 'Certainly I will'; and I went right over, and while she was gone, I washed the children, fixed up the room, brought coal in, and when she came home she found me romping with the little ones. O my, you just should have seen her. She could scarcely get through thanking me. She actually kissed me, and said, 'If becoming a Christian makes people so kind and good I also would love to be one.'"

"Kind words and kind acts can never die," Esther replied. "True religion makes the soul happy, and full of desires to do good to others. It is said of Jesus 'that he went about doing good.' As long as we are engaged in the delightful service of Jesus by doing good and at the same time try to win some soul to Christ we will become strong. In God's word we are also told 'to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.'"

"Miss Esther," exclaimed Agnes, "why is it that I am not a strong, active Christian as you?"

"My dear little Agnes," Esther replied, "for the same reason that you did not at once grow as tall as I am. In Christian life you must grow the same as in physical life."

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT CHURCH SHALL I JOIN?

"It is not supposed that a young Christian can be as strong as one who has been in God's church ten, twenty and more years," she continued. "Little children must learn to talk, walk and act, and gradually grow and develop into manhood. Exactly so must young Christians. The child's mind is like a white sheet of paper, nothing on it. It is blank. It must be taught things it ought to know. As it gets impressions on its mind, it will know what to eat, how to act and what to do. You, as young Christians, are as babies in Christ Jesus. You have little or limited ideas what your life may be, and what you ought to do. For the purpose of teaching and training young Christians, God gave us his Holy Bible. This wonderful book contains God's will, and gives us an account of his dealings with his people. Now, in order to do God's will it is important that we know his will. For this reason we must have teachers."

"O! how true that is," exclaimed Agnes; "I read the other day in Ephesians iv: 11, 12, that 'God gave some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.'"

"Have you noticed in the fourteenth verse what God gave pastors and teachers for?" asked Esther, the Royal Teacher.

"Indeed I have," Agnes replied. "That we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine."

"This certainly is clear," exclaimed Esther. "Correct teaching, in order to be established, is as important as placing a good, solid foundation under a large building. I see Dorothy Behney has her Bible open. Dorothy, will you please read Hebrews xiii: 9?"

"Yes, Miss Esther, I will," Dorothy cheerfully exclaimed, and then read, "'Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines, for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace.'"

"Thank you, Dorothy," exclaimed Esther. "Kindly, please read 2 Peter i: 12."

The young Bible reader quickly turned to the verse and read, "'Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and be established in the present faith.'"

"What things?" quickly asked Eleanor Schaner.

"Things of which Peter wrote," answered Esther, "and the things which Jesus and his Apostles taught. Dorothy, please read for our edification what Peter said."

Dorothy, beginning at the first verse, read until she finished reading verse eight, when Esther asked her to read this verse again.

"For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Miss Esther," calmly exclaimed Irene Snyder, "I was asked by my dear mother whether I am sure that I am saved."

"What did you answer her, my quiet Irene?" asked Esther. Irene replied, "I answered that the Bible promises me that if I believe in Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, I shall have everlasting life. I believed it,

hence I am saved. I trusted in the promise of God. Then the Spirit of God gave witness to my spirit that I am a child of God. What more do I need, mother? For I know that 'the love of God is shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost which is given unto me.' I feel in my soul that I am a new person. I have a new mind, a new heart, a new love, and I feel as if I ought always praise Jesus, and go about doing good in his name."

"Irene! Irene! my darling child," exultingly exclaimed Esther, "The Spirit of God surely helped you to answer your mother. We read, 'Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.'"

"Miss Esther, what does it mean to be a witness for Jesus?" asked Kate Hoverter.

"Dear Katie, I am very glad you asked this, for I wanted to speak about it before we part for the evening," replied Esther. "In the Acts we read that Jesus, before he ascended into heaven, said to his disciples: 'Ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth.'"

"Those who knew Jesus and saw his wonderful life, his agonizing death, his glorious resurrection and his marvelous ascension, were to tell others, and to preach that all this was done for our salvation. And, now, all believers in Christ are to be witnesses of what he has done for them."

"I am so glad that I can be a witness for Jesus," happily cried Kate, "for

"I love to tell the story
Of unseen things above,
Of Jesus and his glory,
Of Jesus and his love;

I love to tell the story,
Because I know 'tis true;
It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do.””

Time had arrived to separate, but Esther suggested that, “Let us sing this stanza, and bid Katie God's blessing on her great mission of witnessing for Jesus. This is a privilege every child of God has. Let us, wherever and whenever we have opportunity, tell to others what Jesus has done for our souls.”

The girls returned to their several homes greatly benefitted, and encouraged by the time they had spent with their Royal Teacher.

* * *

At several of the services Pastor Hoover extended invitations, and urged the young Christians to unite with the church. He stated that Jesus Christ had established the church, and that on the day of Pentecost, when three thousand people believed the preaching of the Apostles, they organized themselves into a body or church, and later “the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” From this time on, the pastor declared, believers in Christ, everywhere, united with the church. The Apostles in their missionary journeys organized churches. We read in Acts xiv: 23, that the Apostles “ordained them elders in every church.” All throughout the Acts and many epistles, the church is mentioned as a very important and necessary organization. The church was called together; officers, such as elders and deacons, were ordained to administer the churches; letters were written to the churches. Christ's

last great charge was to the seven churches of Asia. The church consists of persons who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, and have banded together for mutual good and God's glory. Church organization is a positive necessity for the establishment of Christ's kingdom, for the spread of the gospel, for the edifying of God's children. God ordained, and by his Holy Spirit sanctioned the uniting in one body, or church, all his believers.

In the very nature of the work of God and for the propagation of his gospel it is absolutely necessary that churches be organized, and that every child of God be a member of the church.

A person who holds aloof from the church cannot be relied upon. He is not affiliated with her welfare, is indifferent to her interests, and is a failure in time of struggle.

He wants to enjoy the benefits and blessings which other people work for, but is not willing to work himself for it. He reminds me of a man who is not willing to help prepare a good dinner, yet is always ready to sit up to eat it.

While Pastor Hoover was discussing on this subject, Esther's class sat and listened with great attention. Each one saw the reasonableness of the preacher's arguments and proofs for church fellowship.

The all-important question in the mind of the class was, "What church shall I join?"

It was an easy matter for Eleanor Schaner to decide. Her parents were members of the church of God at Green street from her earliest recollection. It was here she went to Sunday-school ever since she could walk.

Miss Esther, while desiring that her class should be a

band of earnest workers and labor together for one glorious purpose. Yet she hesitated to use her personal influence to induce them to unite with the church of which she was a member, unless she could do so through conviction by the word of God.

She was convinced that the church of her choice believed, taught and practiced the truth as nearly in accord with the Holy Scriptures as any of which she had knowledge. She was truly in sympathy and worked in harmony with the doctrine of this church. Nevertheless, she was, as she stated to her class when the girls came to her with the question, "What church shall I join?"

"Dear girls, I shall cheerfully answer your question by seeking to instruct you in God's word. I shall do so as our martyred President Lincoln said, 'With malice toward none and charity for all,' I shall teach the truth as I see the truth. I love the church of God because I am convinced that her teaching is as nearly in harmony with God's word as any, and nearer than many. We are not to teach as Bible truth, traditions of men, nor uphold a doctrine because it is historical, or because our forefathers taught it."

"But, Miss Esther, are not all churches alike?" asked Agnes. "Are they not all striving for heaven?"

"Your last question first," replied the teacher. "No doubt all are striving for heaven. At least I have charity to believe so. But that all churches are alike or nearly alike I have reason to doubt. To be alike there need to be a similarity; alike in every respect, alike in nature, in spirit and in purpose. Jesus so prayed that they may be one, as we are. (John xvii: 11.)

"Now we notice a great dissimilarity. One body

teaches one thing and another body teaches directly the opposite. I read of a church that teaches Christ is the Son of God and also of a church that Christ is not the Son of God, but simply a good man. I shall not mention the many views taught. We want to know what the Scriptures teach. This book is an infallible guide. It is our duty as well as our privilege to search the Book of God."

"Do you mean to say that your church is right and all other churches in error?" asked Kate.

"No, I do not mean to say so, my dear Katie," replied Miss Esther. "I mean to say, and do say that so far as I have searched the New Testament I believe that the church of which I am a member comes as near the teachings of Christ and his Apostles as any and nearer than some. I believe that in all churches there is taught some excellent truth, and yet there is a grave possibility that error has crept in unawares and I fear will continue to creep in. It was so in the days of the Apostles."

"Is it possible that there were divisions in their time? and that error was taught?" asked Dorothy.

"Indeed there were divisions in Paul's time, and error was being taught," answered Esther.

"Will Agnes, who is so quick at finding Bible verses, read I Timothy iv: 1, 2?"

"I will, Miss Esther," replied Agnes. "'Now the Spirit speaketh expressly that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron.'"

Galatians i: 7, "There are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

"Then we read of divisions in the church. Please read I Corinthians i: 12."

Agnes read, ““Now this I say that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ.””

“Paul warns the church against those who teach contrary to the word of God. Agnes may now read Romans xvi: 17.”

““Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned and avoid them.””

“You see, girls, if almost at the beginning of the church there were such who introduced false teachings, there is more danger now. Therefore, the greater necessity to carefully search the Scriptures.””

CHAPTER VII.

SEARCHING THE SCRIPTURES WITH CLASS No. 10.

“Let us therefore carefully and prayerfully search God’s word. Meet me in our class-room to-morrow afternoon. All who come bring your Bibles along. If you have time look up in your concordance all verses referring to the church and write the references in your tablets.”

Following a brief conversation, the girls departed for their homes. You just should have seen those girls after they reached their homes. The sparrows in our yard never so eagerly picked up the crumbs as did these five girls pick out “Church” in the Bible.

That afternoon the entire class was in the room waiting for Esther, their Royal Teacher. Esther, a little before she was to leave her home, was impressed that she needed the guidance of the Holy Spirit, so that she could correctly instruct her girls. She needed to pray. A part of her prayer was, “Blessed Savior, thou who hast redeemed me with thine own precious blood, and who hast redeemed Class Number 10, will thou let thy Holy Spirit guide me in teaching correctly thy will and thy truth? Jesus, let it not matter what my view is, what I think; but what is thy truth, thy will, thy commandment.”

When Esther arrived in the class-room she found five girls, each with her Bible, and all eager to know what the good book said about the right church. But, before beginning, the teacher again offered a short prayer for

holy guidance, after which she asked, "Girls, have you looked up references of the 'church' in your Bibles?"

"We have, Miss Esther," replied the class.

"Now, then, girls, please tell me of what church did you read in the New Testament?"

Quickly they replied, "Church of God, Church of Christ, Church of the first-born."

"Splendid! You certainly must have been looking up your subject," cheerfully replied Esther. "Let us, now, refer to several passages which make mention of the name of the church; later we may see what the New Testament says about the church. Agnes Stover, who is so handy in quickly turning to the verses, may read as you quote them. "Who has the first?"

"I have," exclaimed Kate Hoverter. "Acts xx: 28."

Agnes read: "Feed the CHURCH OF GOD, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

After this each of the girls had a passage. One called for I Corinthians i: 2, and II Corinthians i: 1. "Unto the CHURCH OF GOD which is at Corinth."

I Corinthians x: 32: "Give none offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the CHURCH OF GOD."

I Corinthians xi: 16, says: "CHURCHES OF GOD," and verse 22: "Despise ye the CHURCH OF GOD," and in chapter xv: 9, "I persecuted the CHURCH OF GOD."

I Thessalonians xi: 14: "Followers of the CHURCHES OF GOD, which in Judea are in Christ Jesus."

Galatians i: 13: "Beyond measure I persecuted the CHURCH OF GOD."

"O! here," exclaimed one, "it is called in I Timothy iii: 15, 'CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD.' "

"And here," cried another, "the church is called in Romans xvi: 16: 'CHURCHES OF CHRIST.' "

“And in Hebrews xii: 23, we read: ‘CHURCH OF THE FIRST-BORN.’”

“Is it not wonderful,” exclaimed Dorothy Behney, “how many times God’s church is named by his name? or by the name of his Son?”

“It certainly is, for surely no one has the absolute right to name God’s church, but God,” began Esther. “The Apostles who lived when Christ lived knew the mind of God, and always called the church by the name which is in harmony with God’s will, and in his honor. If Christ, who is God, claims the church as “my church,” he surely knows by what name his church should be known. Since we have learned from the Bible that the church was known in the early history as the CHURCH OF GOD, it is highly proper for us to learn more about the church.”

“O, Miss Esther,” cried Dorothy Behney, “Who first began the church? Do we read of the church in the gospels?”

“Yes, dear, several times the word ‘church,’ is mentioned in the gospels,” Esther assured her. “Please read Matthew xvi: 18, ‘Upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ Here you see that Jesus Christ is the builder, or organizer of his own church. He built it on the confession of Simon Peter, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. By the word ‘build’ is meant the organizing or establishing of a body of people who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and worship and obey him. These people are redeemed by the blood of Christ. Who will read Acts xx: 28?”

“I will,” replied Irene Snyder.

“To feed the CHURCH OF GOD, which he hath pur-

chased with his own blood." "Any one who believes in Jesus as he who died for their sins are considered as being purchased with the blood of Christ," continued Esther. "Now read I Peter i: 18 and 19. Here you learn that we are 'Not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold. But with the precious blood of Christ,' etc. Now all those people who were redeemed, in order for their mutual edification, instruction and encouragement, as well as to unitedly worship and serve God were organized into a body called the church.

The church had good men at its head who were to act as officers or rulers. These were as we read in Acts xx: 28, to feed the CHURCH OF GOD. That is to teach them God's word so that the church could grow spiritually. Please read Ephesians iv: 11, 12."

"And he gave some . . . evangelists. Some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

"In Paul's letter to Timothy and Titus, he names these officers—elders and deacons."

"Miss Esther," Eleanor Sehaner exclaimed, "the church is represented here as a society; but other places as a building."

"Yes," continued Esther, the Royal Teacher, "and also as a fold of Christ, a spiritual house, the temple of God. This refers chiefly to the nature and office of the CHURCH OF GOD. Please read John x: 16."

"There shall be one fold and one shepherd."

"O, Miss Esther, that is beautiful; that means that Jesus watches over his church as a good shepherd," happily exclaimed Irene Snyder.

"It truly is, and it is also encouraging to know and feel that our dear Savior watches over us and provides for us," added the Royal Teacher.

"I can't rightly understand," asked Agnes Stover, "how Jesus can be the only one shepherd of only one fold when there are so many folds or churches."

"This is also a mystery to me," replied Esther. "The New Testament speaks of the oneness of things: and Christ prayed that his followers should be one. Here we have one fold, and one shepherd. Suppose we look up the word 'one.'"

All the girls got busy looking for "one," when one exclaimed, here is John xvii: 11, end of verse it reads: "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are."

In verses 21, 22, Christ continues his marvelous prayer for the oneness or unity of all his followers. Please read Galatians iii: 28, last part." Quickly one read, "'For ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'"

"Here is one in Ephesians iv: 5," exclaimed Kate Hoverter. "One Lord, one faith and one baptism."

"To my way of understanding the New Testament, and the import of our dear Savior's prayer, made a little while before he went into the gloomy garden of Gethsamane and the night before his crucifixion, the people of God should be one in faith, one in worship and one in church name," continued the Royal Teacher. "But sin, ignorance, lack of spiritual enlightenment and the lack of prayerfully searching the Scriptures have produced these divisions."

"Miss Esther," called Dorothy, "are all those people lost, who do not understand the Scriptures as the Church of God does?"

"No! indeed," replied Esther, "we are saved because we believe in the Son of God, and so are all people saved

who believe in him. But the difference is, some get nearer the truth and derive greater benefit from it and are thus enabled to do more nearly that which pleases our dear Savior."

"You noticed the other evening at the Sewing Circle, where we were engaged in making fancy work, those who sat farthest from the light had dimmer vision and worked harder and accomplished the least. Several times our president called out: 'Sisters, please sit closer to the light; you can work easier and do better work.' Just so it is in studying the will of Jesus the head of the church; we must get close in touch with what the Scriptures teach. We must sit close to the light, even as Mary, sister of Lazarus, who sat at Jesus' feet."

"It is our duty and privilege to seek all the light from God's word we need. Jesus commands us to 'search the Scriptures.' We have no right to be satisfied with the teachings of a church simply because that church says so. It is our business when we hear things taught to do as did the Bereans."

"What did they do?" the girls suddenly asked.

"Please turn to Acts xvii: 10, 11," said Esther.

"O! I see," one exclaimed, as she read: "'These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so.'"

"You see, girls, that to search the Scripture, so as to learn the actual truth, is called 'more noble' by the writer of the Acts," replied Esther. "The Scriptures are brim full of God's revealed will, full of commandments and full of promises. It may be doubtful whether any one has grasped all the good things."

"We therefore need to diligently seek to know exactly

what our dear Savior wants us to know in order that we do just what he wants us to do.

“In all his commandments, Christ has an object in view. When God commanded Moses to build a tabernacle and said what kind of furniture should be placed in it, and what kind of sacrifice should be offered, and who should offer it, God had an object in view.

“Exactly so, Jesus Christ, when he organized his church, gave it the name he desired and said who should constitute his church and what the members of his church are expected to do, in order that he may establish his kingdom. Is it any wonder then that he said, ‘If ye love me keep my commandments?’

“When your mother has a dress-maker she instructs her to make a dress for one child this way and a dress for another child that way. The mother knows why she wants an article made so and so. It is the dress-maker’s business to make what mother says. Exactly so, Jesus has a right to expect us to obey him.”

“But! but teacher,” exclaimed Kate, “my parents belong to another church and my dear old grandmother who died last Summer was a member of another church. Will she suffer any loss because she did not have the light we have?”

“Katie, my dear child,” replied Miss Esther, “the best answer I can give you is, what I once read in our *Church Advocate*, which was spoken by a minister whose parents were dead but had belonged to an entirely different church than he did. He said, ‘Because I claim a clearer insight into the revealed will of God through Jesus Christ and his word than my parents possessed does not signify that I sit in judgment on them, nor consider them condemned for not understanding and accepting what I now deem to be important truth.’

“We are responsible for the light that we have. Yet we must not overlook the fact that we are also equally responsible for the opportunity to obtain that light.

“Now, when Jesus and his Apostles called the church, ‘*Church of God*,’ or ‘*Church of Christ*,’ is it not reasonable that we should follow his example and do what he did?”

“It surely is,” replied the entire class.

“Is it not sad that Christians are so divided, and teach such different doctrines?” asked Irene Snyder.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEEKING FOR MORE LIGHT BY CLASS NUMBER 10.

“It certainly is sad,” replied Esther, the Royal Teacher, to Irene Snyder’s question. “It would be pleasing to our Savior, if all his followers would unitedly work together for the building up of his church and the spread of his gospel. There being so many different churches, and teaching so many different doctrines and each claiming to be found in the Bible, is very confusing; and, like in the building of the tower of Babel, it creates confusion and rends apart. It embarrasses the great work of foreign missions, it causes contentions in families and communities, it disturbs the mind of young converts and it holds back the progress of Christ’s kingdom. But it is time for us to return to our homes and assist our mothers. Before we close, I wish to ask, ‘What is the name of the church as recorded in the New Testament, from what you have learned?’”

All exclaimed, “Church of God” or “Church of Christ.”

“Miss Esther,” called Agnes Stover, “have other churches the right to call themselves church of God?”

“Assuredly they have,” replied Esther. “If a number of persons purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ, unite for the worship of God and for the advancement of his kingdom they have the right to call their group Church of God.”

“Why don’t they?” Agnes continued to ask.

“This is not for me to say. You need to ask them for information,” Esther replied. “I wish and pray that all God’s redeemed people be known by one name.”

"How would it do, Miss Esther, if those different churches would name 'God' with the church?" Agnes once more asked. "If the Presbyterian Church would say, 'Presbyterian Church of God,' the Methodist say, 'Methodist Church of God,' and so on?"

"This would be better," the Royal Teacher replied, "it would be more definite. Whenever those denominations say church they certainly mean the Church of God. Some time ago I was attending church services elsewhere, when I heard one of our ministers say, after he was introduced as a minister of the Church of God, 'I am glad to address you members of the Methodist Church of God.' The Methodists exclaimed aloud, 'Amen.' I believe it would not be such a great difficulty for all churches to include God or Christ in the name.

"But what is more confusing and embarrassing is the teaching of so many doctrines. One denomination teaches that baptism may be administered by sprinkling, another by immersion, by others any way will do; and some teach that baptism is not necessary. Some teach that infants and little children must be baptized; others teach that only persons who do believe must be baptized; while others teach that baptism will save people.

"There are different opinions regarding the Lord's Supper. Then there is feet-washing. Some teach that feet-washing is an ordinance and should be observed by the church, while others say it is not to be observed, and even make light of it. Then there are some who believe that Christ will come before the millennium while others believe he will come after the millennium. Then there are others who say 'it matters not what you believe or do, just so your life is right.' Now, if we could all see more nearly alike how much better it would be, how

much good work we could do, and how much more pleasing it would be to God."

"Miss Forney," exclaimed Dorothy Behney, "is there a great difference between the teaching of the church of God and those who use other names?"

"In some teachings there is, yet in some we are alike," the teacher replied. "The larger number of churches believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that he came into this world, and wrought signs and wonders, and preached; then suffered and died on the cross for our sins, that all are sinners before God; that our sins are forgiven when we accept by faith, Christ as our Savior; that all believers in Christ receive the Holy Spirit; that we should worship God in spirit and in truth, that we should live holy lives; that the righteous who die will have everlasting life, and the wicked, or unbelievers, eternal death; that Jesus Christ will come again and that there will be a judgment when the believers and unbelievers shall be eternally separated one from the other. These are generally believed and taught by the church of God."

"Miss Esther," exclaimed Eleanor Schaner, "some time ago I went with Kate Hoverter to the church her parents belong to, when they pray they stand, while at our Green Street church we are expected to kneel. Which is right?"

"Well, Eleanor," replied the teacher, "while I prefer to kneel when I pray, I also have attended services where the congregation stood; and I stood with them and also prayed. In the Bible we read of kneeling and standing. Jesus in his talk with the woman at the well near Sychar, I think, gives the key to correct worship. Please read John iv: 23, 24. "But the hour cometh, and now is,

when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth."

"Girls, I positively must hasten home, as mother has her hands brimful of work," exclaimed Esther. "We have now searched the Scriptures concerning the church. Next Lord's day Pastor Hoover will fellowship a number of the recent converts. It is now for each of you to decide for yourselves. If you are not fully persuaded in your own mind, search the Scriptures."

"Miss Esther, even if I have decided, but should my parents object, what shall I do?" inquired Agnes.

"First of all, dear Agnes," replied Esther, "make this a matter of prayer and ask God to let you see which is right. Next study the New Testament on the subject. Should you decide to unite with the Green Street church of God, speak kindly to your parents about it. If they object, do not get excited about it, nor assert your independence nor act contrary to their wishes; but prayerfully and patiently wait for a favorable time. It is natural and reasonable for parents to desire that their children become members of their own church. When you ask permission to unite with the Green Street church of God, and your parents ask you your reason, try to kindly tell them. Do nothing rash. Always pray and exercise patience. What I suggest you to do I also advise each one to do. It is helpful to have your parents' consent.

"Surely we must hasten home. Let us pray for one another, and hope in God for the future. If you can, all come to the Lord's day morning service."

A few minutes later each hurried home.

During the remainder of that week there was much use made of Bibles by Class Number 10, and frequently members of that class were engaged in secret, yet earnest prayer.

On the day previous to the morning when Pastor Charles Hoover was to fellowship a number of believers in Christ, he and Superintendent Austin Sigler held a consultation about fellowshiping the converts, and especially those whose parents were members of other denominations. In particular they talked about Class Number 10, when the pastor said, "Let Miss Esther Forney, the Royal Teacher, instruct that class and all will result in what is right."

"I believe you are right, Pastor Hoover," exclaimed the Superintendent.

Meanwhile the girls asked their parents. The parents of several were pleased to know that their daughters were leading godly lives, and wished to unite with God's people. Their consent was easily obtained. Katie's parents were delighted to hear that, for once, she had made a decision, and had, longer than usually, stuck to one idea. They encouraged her in her decision.

Dorothy's parents replied to her, "We are glad, indeed, to permit you to unite with a church in which is such a consecrated Christian as your teacher."

The parents of Eleanor Schaner were members of the Green Street church of God, and gladly gave their consent.

Irene Snyder's widowed mother readily gave her consent, and grieved because she herself had not begun in the right way when her little Irene did.

The father of Agnes Stover, when asked made some objections. "You know, my dear daughter, that that

church teaches that one must be dipped under the water when baptized. They also observe feet-washing. Now I never could believe in such things. They make one do many things that are unpleasant."

"Dear papa," Agnes replied, "so far they did not make me, nor compel me to do anything. Esther, my teacher, said that the service of God is a free-will one; that we need to do as we have light and understanding. She even did not ask me to unite with the church. She simply got us girls to search the Scripture, and asked us to obey and follow Jesus."

"Well, Agnes, let us think about it until near the time. When will they fellowship members again?"

"On Sunday, or as Miss Esther calls it, 'the Lord's day,'" Agnes replied.

"Suppose you speak to mother about it."

Agnes had a pleasant but earnest talk with her mother on the subject.

On the following Lord's day morning Pastor Hoover stated that the following had made application for membership with the Green Street church of God. He then read the names. But before he had completed the list, he paused for nearly a minute and then added: "We have here a splendid example of what a prayerful, faithful, tactful and patient teacher can do. Less than three months ago our good Superintendent Sigler was perplexed concerning a class in the Sunday-school that was without a regular teacher. This morning I have the great joy to read the names of every member of that class who have been redeemed by the precious blood of God's dear Son, and are as follows: 'Irene Snyder, Agnes Stover, Dorothy Behney, Kate Hoverter and Eleanor Schaner.'"

All whose names had been called came forward, until a row of applicants extending across the entire room stood before the pastor. In addressing the applicants, the pastor asked: "Are you willing to take this book—the Holy Scripture—as your guide and counsellor? Are you willing to obey its teachings and commandments in so far as you obtain light and understanding, and are you willing to listen and be taught from this, the word of God? If so, answer, 'I do.'"

All in a low, distinct and reverential tone responded, "I do."

On their response, the pastor extended the right hand of Christian fellowship to each one, and said: "I extend to you my dear brother (or sister) the right hand of fellowship, and bid you welcome to all the rights and privileges of the Green Street church of God," etc.

Following a brief charge to the church, and a fervent prayer for the new members, the members of the church came forward and greeted the newly admitted members.

There was a deeply solemn, but joyful feeling that flowed from soul to soul. Many wept for joy. When Esther, the Royal Teacher, advanced to greet her class, she embraced each one and wept, and then kissed each girl. Several times she, loud enough to be heard, praised God for what her eyes had seen and her soul enjoyed that Lord's day morning. She resolved that morning that she would seek to teach her class all God's appointed ways and do as did Aquilla and Priscilla for Apollos, "Exound the ways of the Lord more perfectly."

CHAPTER IX.

SEEKING TO KNOW GOD'S WILL.

The marvelous results of Esther, the Royal Teacher's blessed efforts with Class Number 10 began to influence other teachers, and incited them to greater zeal and more prayerful and tactful teaching. It began to manifest itself that many of the scholars in the Green Street church of God Sunday-school were concerned for their soul's salvation. For quite a number of girls and boys of the age of twelve to sixteen and upwards were longing for consecrated teachers, as the one of Class Number 10. A number made personal requests to be transferred to that class. When asked why, the reason given was: "Because Miss Esther tried to win her scholars to Christ."

At the close of the morning services, when a large number, including all of Class Number 10, were fellowshipped, Pastor Hoover buried with Christ in holy baptism more than a score of candidates.

This solemn and significant, yet delightful scene made deep impression on the minds of the girls of Class Number 10. At home, and even during the afternoon Sunday-school session the girls talked about it, and asked Esther quite a number of questions on baptism.

"What shall we do about baptism?" they asked their teacher.

"Search the Holy Scriptures, and seek to know God's will," was her reply. "Read all you can find in the New Testament on baptism, and at our earliest con-

venience we shall study to know our blessed Savior's will. When we know his will, and we love him, we will cheerfully do what he wants us to do."

"I believe it," cheerfully exclaimed Irene Snyder, "For since I gave my heart to Jesus, I love my dear mamma more than ever, and I am always anxious to know what I can do to please her, and I am also anxious, but a hundred times more so, to please my blessed Jesus who loved me with an everlasting love and even died on the cross for me."

"So do I believe it," added Dorothy Behney, "for I read in John xiv: 15: 'If ye love me keep my commandments.'"

"Yes," quickly cried Agnes Stover, "I read last evening that when the prophet Samuel met King Saul returning from a victorious battle against the Amalekites, in which Saul disobeyed God's commandment, he said, 'Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.'"

"Where did you read this? I don't remember ever reading it," asked Kate Hoverter.

"In I Samuel xv: 22."

"Sorry to say, dear girls, but I must hasten up street to visit a sick lady on whom I promised to call," Esther informed her class, and then added, "Shall we meet Thursday evening to seek to know what is our Savior's will concerning baptism?"

"Yes," exclaimed the class.

"All right, girls," the teacher replied. "Please look up every passage in the New Testament that has the word 'baptism' or 'baptize' in it."

Esther bid each girl an affectionate good-bye and departed. She had walked scarcely half a square when

Eleanor and Irene came to her side, and asked her whether some time they would be permitted to go with her to visit the poor and sick.

"Indeed, dear girls, I shall be glad to have you go along at some other time," pleasantly replied Esther. "This is what I shall wish the class to do. Obedience and service is a true child of God's rightful privilege."

All then returned to their homes, and during every spare moment each girl, like so many busy bees, was seeking verses on baptism and noted them in her tablet.

The girls came on Thursday evening nearly half an hour before the time, and went direct to their class-room. For their benefit the kind janitor turned on the lights in their room.

"Dorothy," called Irene, "have you found many verses on baptism?"

"Many? Indeed I have," Dorothy replied. "I never had an idea that the New Testament contained so much on this subject. It impressed me that Jesus attached great importance to baptism."

During the next fifteen or twenty minutes these five girls, like philosophers, compared their notes on baptism.

"Are my busy beaver Bible searchers here?" asked Esther of the janitor, as she came to the side entrance of the school-room.

"Here! here! bless your royal soul, Miss Esther," he assured her. "They have been here fully half an hour. I turned on the lights and then, Miss Esther, I never heard so much talk on baptism in thirty minutes as I heard this evening."

With this inspiring news, Miss Esther Forney cheerfully entered the class-room, when she was greeted with, "O, Miss Esther, we could scarcely wait for you to come; we are brimful of verses on baptism."

Following a short talk and a prayer for guidance, Class Number 10, and its Royal Teacher, began to seek to know God's will concerning baptism.

"What have you discovered in the New Testament concerning baptism?" she asked.

"Lots and lots," the class replied in unison.

"Suppose we begin. Let each one read five references; after which we shall carefully study the word of God," suggested Esther. "Let Irene lead off."

Each one read five references. "Now, let us ask ourselves questions on this subject," further suggested the Royal Teacher.

"Miss Esther," cried Agnes, "Is baptism very important?"

"From all account in the New Testament it is," the teacher replied. "Let us search the good Book. Let us read what the gospel of Matthew says."

"I have it," called Kate. "Matthew iii: 13-17."

"Will Katie please read it?" asked Esther. She then read.

"Baptism surely must have some great meaning or truth attached to it," said Dorothy in her usual meditative mood, "because Jesus came all the way from Galilee to Jordan to John the Baptist to be baptized. John at first did not want to baptize Jesus. But Jesus said, 'Do it: for it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness.' Don't you think Jesus knew what baptism meant? I do. I know that God was pleased with Jesus for, 'Lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'"

While Dorothy was telling what she thought why Jesus was baptized, Eleanor had ready Matthew xxviii: 19, and then read: "'Go ye therefore, and teach all

nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' This refers to Mark xvi: 16," she added and then read: "'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.'"

"O dear, Miss Esther, I thought that when I believed in Jesus I was saved," sadly exclaimed Irene. "Now, here I see that I must believe and be baptized before I am saved."

"From this verse it would seem so," Esther replied. "Yet the Bible positively teaches that 'Whosoever believeth on the Son of God shall not perish, but have everlasting life.' Read John iii: 16, also in Acts, tenth chapter we read of the salvation of Cornelius and his company, how the Holy Spirit fell on them. They were saved, but Peter commanded them to be baptized. You see that a public confession of Christ by baptism is highly important.

"Jesus was baptized, yet without sin. In Acts reference is made about Paul's sins being washed away, xxii: 16. Now we read in I John i: 7. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." To my mind it means that when we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ it is highly important that we by baptism confess our faith in him."

"Miss Esther, when I was out West last Summer, I heard a preacher tell his congregation that a person's sins are not washed away unless they are baptized," remarked Agnes. "He claimed that Paul's sins were not washed away until after he was baptized."

"I know," replied Esther, "there are some very good people who teach this doctrine. They have several verses that seem to favor their doctrine, but the great weight of Scripture teaches that we are saved by faith in Jesus Christ.

"If we say that baptism is a means of salvation we set aside the importance and value of the blood of Jesus Christ which meant agony and suffering and death on the cross. We have wandered from the question of the importance of baptism."

"We indeed have," calmly replied Dorothy, "In finding baptism in the New Testament I notice that baptism closely followed when people believe in Christ."

"So it does, my quiet Dorothy," the teacher assured her. "Will you please refer to what you mean?"

"I will, Miss Esther," promised Dorothy. "In Acts ii: 41, 'they that gladly received the word were baptized.' Then when Philip preached in Samaria we learn from chapter viii: 12, 'When they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.' I also read in viii: 36 that when Philip preached to the Ethiopian eunuch and he believed he exclaimed, 'See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized. Also in x: 48, after Cornelius and company were saved Peter 'commanded them to be baptized.'"

"Miss Esther, I was going to ask you whether I can get to heaven without being baptized," Kate said. "But since I see such a bunch of verses on the importance of baptism I shall not ask it."

"My dear Katie, I fear thousands of people have asked this question," Esther answered. "Baptism is not the stairway to heaven, but it is a kingly highway to loving obedience and satisfied happiness. Jesus does not love 'mere servants or slaves,' but he certainly does love those who lovingly obey his commandments. Does he not say, 'If ye love me keep my commandments?' Such questions remind me of the young man whose father

was rich. The young fellow was anxious to get equal share of his father's wealth; but he was too lazy to work. He once asked how little he need to do, and yet inherit as much as his brothers and sisters. Girls, let me impress upon your hearts that every true and loyal follower of Jesus is anxious to know what he would have us to do, and then cheerfully do it. God desires, and has the undisputed right to expect obedience from his people. Jesus laid great stress on obedience. Who will read Matthew vii: 21?"

"I will," exclaimed Eleanor. "'Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.'"

"Who will read I Samuel xv: 22," Esther continued.

"I will," called Kate. "'Behold to obey is better than sacrifice.'"

"Agnes will read Hebrews v: 9," the teacher said. Agnes read, "'Being made perfect, he becometh the author of salvation unto all them that obey him.'"

"Dorothy may read 1 John ii: 17. "'But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.'"

"One more; we will ask Irene to read Revelation xx: 13." "'And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them, and they were judged every man according to their works.'"

"Oh, Miss Esther, Miss Esther," cried Kate, "let us pray now, that our loving Savior may let us see in his word exactly what he would have us to do. I never saw it in this light before. I thought all I need to do was to believe."

CHAPTER X.

WHY CLASS NO. 10 DESIRED TO BE BAPTIZED.

"God bless your soul, my dear Katie Hoverter," quickly replied Esther, the Royal Teacher. "Yes, all you need to do in order to have salvation is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, and what follows is what you lovingly and cheerfully will to do. I read in ii Timothy i: 9, about Jesus 'Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, *not according to our works* (notice this), but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.' For your benefit, I shall ask Agnes Stover to read Philippians xi: 13."

Agnes read, "'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.'"

"Now," exclaimed Esther Forney, "let us engage in prayer. It will be helpful for each one of you to offer a short prayer. Pray for wisdom and understanding. I shall make the closing prayer. This is a splendid opportunity to exercise yourselves for public prayer. Who will pray first?"

"I will," exclaimed Katie, and then said: "O blessed Jesus, thou who did redeem me with thy own precious blood, will thou open my eyes that I may see what is thy good and happy will, and then put in my mind and heart a desire to both will and do just what thou will have me to do."

This prayer was followed by Irene Snyder, Eleanor Schaner, Dorothy Behney and last by Agnes Stover.

Miss Esther made the closing prayer. This was a golden chain of earnest, honest pleading by a class of young inquirers for holy light on God's will, and for a correct, submissive spirit for loyal obedience. Prayer of this sort reaches the throne of God where light and grace abounds.

Following this chain of prayers it was an easy task to look into God's word, which pages were illumined with the divine glory.

"Miss Esther," exclaimed Agnes, "what do you suppose my Uncle Harvey said to me?"

"Indeed, Agnes, I have no idea," replied the teacher, rather slowly. "What did he say?"

"He said that I ought not to search so much in the Bible, as it would disturb my peace of mind, and interfere with the knowledge I had," Agnes answered.

"Strange! strange," Esther began. "How truly Jesus speaks of such when he said, 'Men love darkness rather than light.' Your Uncle Harvey reminds me of a story I once read, of a Florentine philosopher, who could not be persuaded to look through one of Galileo's telescopes, lest he should see something in the heavens that would disturb his belief in Aristotle's philosophy. The Bible telescope of God's good will is a fearful disturber of peace to those who content themselves in blissful ignorance of what God wants them to be and do."

"But we are not of that class of philosophers, are we?" Dorothy asked.

"No, indeed, we are not," several replied.

"Since we have read of the importance of baptism, shall we next see what the New Testament says on 'Why persons should be baptized, or the design of baptism?' Esther suggested.

"Yes," the class replied, and Dorothy added, "I have been wondering why Jesus commanded his followers to be baptized. Miss Esther, will you please tell us?"

"I would cheerfully tell you why, but the New Testament is a far better teacher than I am. We will let it be our teacher," replied Esther. "What have you read? Please read."

"Miss Esther," called Agnes, "I see here that Paul refers to baptism in Romans sixth chapter, it reads, 'Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.'"

"O, I see," calmly exclaimed Dorothy. "It is to represent the death, burial and resurrection of our blessed Savior. Is it not beautiful? When people get baptized they commemorate our Savior's burial and resurrection. Just as on last Memorial Day we strewed flowers on grandpa's grave and hung a wreath on the tombstone. It reminded us that he had been a brave soldier."

"Miss Esther," asked Irene, "is this one of Jesus' methods to cause us often to think of him and draw our hearts from ourselves and the world to himself?"

"Exactly so," Esther replied, "whenever you go to your cabinet and you find a letter or a photo of one of your friends, it always reminds you of her. Sometimes you say, 'O my, here is Aunt Sallie's photo. This reminds me that I ought to write a letter to her.' So when we do those things which represent our Savior, it reminds us of him and our privileges of loving and worshipping him more devotedly."

"This really seems clear to me that when a person is baptized she is made to think of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection," declared Agnes.

"I also read in Colossians ii: 12," said Eleanor, "Buried with him in baptism wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

"So have I, so have I," the other girls replied.

"This seems to me, also that baptism is a sign of our deadness to sin and the world and a resurrection to a new life in Jesus," said Dorothy.

"It seems so to me," responded several.

"My! my!" ejaculated Kate. "It's wonderful how charmingly the New Testament opens to our minds our dear Savior's will. I once was in a photograph studio where I saw the process of bringing out the figures. The artist called it developing. So by carefully studying God's word his will is developed."

"Just so true it is to us when one seeks to know God's will, by studying his word it will be shown to us," answered Esther. "As long as we shut our eyes or sit in a dark room we cannot see the beautiful things in life, exactly so it is when we fail to look into the word of God. Such a person is as a girl who sits in a prison cell deprived of her liberty."

"This reminds me of what I read last week in the epistle of James," exclaimed Agnes. "Let me look for it. Yes, here it is, James i: 25. 'But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein he, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, this man shall be blessed in his deed.'"

"Miss Esther, who should be baptized?" seriously asked Dorothy.

"This is a very important question, and should be carefully answered by the word of God," the Royal Teacher declared.

"I for one am anxious to know," asserted Agnes, "for Uncle Harvey says that old persons and also young persons and especially little babies and infants are proper subjects for baptism."

"But my papa, who understands the Bible, says only believers in Christ are proper persons to be baptized," quickly replied Eleanor.

"Just a minute, girls," calmly exclaimed Esther. "We are not anxious to know what either Uncle Harvey, nor Eleanor's father has to say. Let us see what the New Testament says. Please look up your references."

"Here is the first I see," cried Kate, as she pressed her index finger in Matthew xxviii: 19 and 20, and read, "'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.'"

"Let us, beginning with this command of Jesus, seek to learn who are to be baptized," suggested Esther.

"O, this is easy," Dorothy assured her teacher. "Persons who are capable to be taught."

"Yes," added Irene, "and those who are willing to 'observe all things I have commanded you.'"

"Let me read Mark xvi: 16," asked Agnes, who then read: "'He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.' That," added Agnes, "is also clear. It must be one who believes the gospel of Christ."

"Little children and infants cannot understand the teaching of Christ nor believe. I just wonder what Uncle Harvey thinks of this."

As Agnes was apt at quickly turning to the verses and reading, she was asked to read while the remaining four girls called for the verses. Acts xi: 38 was called. "O, I see," Agnes replied. "This is in answer to what the guilty Jews asked: 'What shall we do?' Then Peter said unto them, 'Repent and be baptized.'"

"The people who were commended were such who had guilty consciences and could repent," exclaimed one.

"Verse 41. 'Then they gladly received his word and were baptized.' Isn't that clear? They were persons old enough and knew enough to gladly receive the word," remarked Irene."

Agnes next read Acts viii: 12. "'But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and in the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.'"

Dorothy and Kate both exclaimed at once. "These persons believed Philip's preaching before they were baptized. Then, just look, it says, 'Both men and women,'" added Dorothy. "I wonder why they did not baptize infants?" "Maybe it was because they could not believe," Irene suggested.

Agnes read in the same chapter verses 36-38, after Philip had preached to the Ethiopian eunuch, "And as they went on their way, they came to a certain water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water, what does hinder me to be baptized?' And Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.' And he answered and said, 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.'"

"I see," said Dorothy, "that whether large or small, people must believe in Jesus before they are fit for baptism."

Agnes was asked to read the entire tenth chapter of Acts. Then she read verse 44, “‘While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.’”

“Yes,” Agnes exclaimed, “but infants may have been present and also heard the word.”

“But infants can’t and don’t believe the word,” spoke Eleanor. “I see in xi: 17, ‘For as much then as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ.’”

“Then in verse 46 we learn that they spake with tongues and magnified God,” Irene remarked. “No wonder Peter commanded them to be baptized for they had received the Holy Ghost. I never heard nor read that infants nor unbelievers receive the Holy Ghost.”

Agnes read Acts xviii: 8: “‘Many of the Corinthians hearing, believed and were baptized.’” “I see it more and more,” exclaimed Kate. “It is first they hear the word of God then believe the word of God and be baptized. I am convinced that only persons old enough to hear and believe God’s word are the proper ones to be baptized. I for one, by the grace of my dear Savior, desire to be baptized.”

“So do I,” exclaimed each one, except Agnes.

“There are some things I cannot understand,” she said. “There are my parents and Uncle Harvey and millions of ministers and other good people who say that the New Testament teaches that infants are proper subjects for baptism. I have read from Matthew to the end of Revelation and I can’t find one verse for it. I even asked Uncle Harvey about it. He said it was in the Bible. But, when I asked him for the verses, he replied that he was too busy to look them up. That

his pastor had taught him so. The last time I asked him, he said, 'Don't the Bible say, "Suffer little children to come unto me?"' I looked it up. All I could read was that 'Jesus took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.'—Mark x: 16. Not one word of baptism. Yet I need not worry about that, for I am not an infant; but a believer in Jesus Christ, and I also desire to be baptized. Only I am not clear in my mind as to the mode. Some say one must be dipped or immersed; others say sprinkle."

"Dear Agnes, to-morrow evening we will learn what the Scriptures say on this." Esther replied.

CHAPTER XI.

CLASS No. 10 FOLLOWING IN JESUS' FOOTSTEPS.

The class met again this evening for the study of God's word. Esther, the Royal Teacher, was there early and offered a prayer for guidance. Esther was pleased to notice that each member of her class had an unusually happy countenance.

"My dear girls, what does all this mean? You are as happy as the angels were when they sang their carol on the night when Jesus was born in Bethlehem," she asked.

"We are happy, because we are willing to be and to do just what our dear Jesus wants us to be and do," was the reply.

"Indeed," said Irene Snyder, "I feel like singing

"How happy are they who their Savior obey
And have laid up their treasures above."

A few stanzas were sung, when Dorothy Behney said, "Let us sing 'Trust and obey.'"

"All right, girls, if you feel to sing, sing with the spirit and with the understanding," exclaimed the teacher, Esther Forney. "Only one stanza and the chorus, as we have met to search God's word."

Six loving souls sang with melody in their hearts:

"When we walk with the Lord
In the light of his word,



What a glory he sheds on our way!
While we do his good will
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

Trust and obey
For there's no other way
To be happy in Jesus
But to trust and obey."

"Now for a Bible study," Esther called. "During our searching yesterday, to what conclusion did we come as to who are proper subjects for baptism?"

"Why, certainly, those who heard the word of God and believe it," all agreed.

"Yesterday Agnes Stover asked, 'How should people be baptized according to the New Testament?'" Esther stated. "Some say sprinkle, while others say dip, or immerse in water. We shall now learn from God's word. Who has the first reference? Suppose we see how Jesus, our great Leader, was baptized. I notice Eleanor Schaner has a passage. Will you, please, read it?"

"I will," Eleanor replied, and read Matthew iii: 16, "'And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.'"

"That is strange," exclaimed Agnes, "for Uncle Harvey said that Jesus was in the Jordan valley and stood near the water. Here it says that Jesus 'went up straightway *out of the water.*'"

"Miss Esther, may I read Mark i: 9?" asked Kate Hoverter.

"Certainly," Esther assured her.

Kate read, "'And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.'"

"Here I see Jesus was baptized *in* Jordan," Agnes remarked. "'In' is not 'at, nor near.' I am going to show this to Uncle Harvey."

"Yes," began Kate, "in the next verse it reads, 'Straightway coming up out of the water.' A person cannot come out of the water unless he first went into the water."

"Let us see what it is said of the manner of baptism in the Acts," Esther suggested. "What have you, Agnes?"

"Here is about the Ethiopian whom Philip baptized." Agnes read Acts viii: 38, 39: "'And he commanded the chariot to stand still, and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing.'"

"Dear teacher, I cannot understand why those two men went into the water if sprinkling would have answered just as well," Agnes seriously remarked.

"In John iii: 23, I read," exclaimed Dorothy, "'John also was baptizing in Enon near to Salim because there was much water there.' Now, the reason is given why he selected Enon, simply 'because there was much water there.' It surely requires much more water to dip or immerse a person than it does to sprinkle."

"The other day we studied the purposes of baptism and we read about it in Romans, sixth chapter," declared Kate. "What does that chapter say on this subject?"

"Much, indeed," replied Esther. In a few seconds all were softly reading that chapter. Esther sat quietly waiting for a series of questions. She waited longer than she expected, for it seemed as if they read it a dozen

of times. At last Kate exclaimed, "Just look here, baptism is here described as a burial and a resurrection."

"Yes, I have been impressed with this figure," Agnes replied.

"O my! how plain it is in verse four. 'Therefore we are buried with him by baptism unto death: that as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.'"

"How was Jesus buried?" asked Eleanor.

"The gospels tell us. Some one read Matthew xxvii: 59, 60." "'And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock, and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre.'"

"O my!" cried Irene. "That is plain. Jesus was laid in the tomb and the door was closed by rolling a big stone over it. When we buried my dear papa they lowered his body into a deep grave and then they covered it with ground. We then said, 'Our papa is buried in the cemetery.' If to be buried with our dear Jesus in baptism, then surely a person must be buried in the water."

"Miss Esther," exclaimed Agnes, "In the fifth verse I read, 'For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.' What does this mean?"

"Let us see," Esther replied. "Last Spring you assisted your mother to plant vegetables. How did you do it?"

"O! that was easy to do," Agnes boldly answered. "We made holes in the ground and put the roots of the plants in the ground and then covered them, and the seed we dropped into holes and covered the seed."

"When Jesus was dead, what did they do with his body?" asked Esther.

"Why they buried it of course," Agnes quickly replied.

"O how beautiful, how charming this lesson of planting seems to me!" exclaimed Dorothy. "Now, I think I see why we are to be baptized, and why we are to be dipped or immersed in water. I just feel like praising my blessed Jesus."

The four girls and their Royal Teacher sat up erect, and turned their faces toward Dorothy for an explanation for her new vision which was giving her so much joy.

"Now, dear Dorothy, please tell us of your new vision," Esther begged her.

"I shall; but I cannot tell it exactly as I see it and feel it in my soul," Dorothy lovingly replied.

"Here are two figures, one called baptism and the other planting; both meaning a burial or a covering over. The one in water and the other in the earth. Now, then, as Jesus died and was buried and arose again, so have all who believe in Jesus as their dear Savior the privilege to be united with Jesus and in the likeness of the burial and planting declare our union with him. We die with him, we are buried with him. Being baptized into Jesus Christ is in order to show that we are united to him."

"I then suppose, my darling Dorothy, you mean," asked Esther, while tears of joy filled her eyes, "that as many as have been baptized into Jesus have become more intimately united with him, and are therefore united with him in his death, and glorious resurrection. The going down into the water and being buried in the water a person makes a public acknowledgement that she is dead to the world and sin and has a new resurrection in union with Christ to a newness of life."

"That is what I mean, only I can't tell it exactly so," Dorothy calmly replied.

"Dear Dorothy," Esther continued, "the Spirit of God surely enlightened your soul. If I were to be baptized now, I certainly would realize more of the fullness of joy by knowing the real value of being buried with Christ in baptism."

"Miss Esther, if this is true, how then can the christening of infants and little children be a correct baptism?" asked Agnes.

"To be candid with you, my dear girl, I cannot answer your question," seriously answered the Royal Teacher. "Do you know?"

"I do not," Agnes replied. "If by baptizing a person shows her dying with Christ, being buried with him and arising with him it must be an act in which she must have a loving will to do so. Now to my mind little children and infants are not able to do this."

"I cannot understand as I study my Bible with a heart full of charity for all how a Bible student can find any precept, command or example for baptizing any but believers in Christ or any other way than by a burial in water," Esther calmly declared.

"Why is it that so many Christians don't see it as we see it?" again asked Agnes.

"This is also difficult for me to answer," Esther confessed. "Yet I think I can give several reasons for it. Many people have not heard any other way but to christen children and older persons who had not been christened in early life, never saw or learned of any other way. It has become to them a custom. I know a minister who was asked to christen two infants by their parents who neither claimed to be Christians nor cared

to be Christians. When asked, 'Why do you want your babies baptized?' replied: 'We don't know except our neighbors said that if they are not baptized, and they should die, they would be lost.'"

"Then there are many who scarcely give baptism a serious thought, claiming that they are satisfied and their conscience does not worry them; they will not trouble about it.

"To some it is the rule of their church and they are satisfied. Custom and prejudice has much to do with church teaching. Yet there are others who believe as we understand the New Testament, but find it difficult to break loose from old customs and associations."

"Dear teacher, surely those who teach differently than we understand the New Testament must quote some Scripture for it," asserted Kate.

"Yes, they do," Esther answered. "Who will read Matthew ix: 13: "'Go ye and learn what that meaneth. I will have mercy and not sacrifice,'" Agnes read, and then exclaimed, "I can't see anything about baptism here."

"But," quickly remarked Esther, "It is used to prove that we should exercise mercy and not compel persons to be immersed in water in cold or disagreeable weather. That rather than to compel people to sacrifice their comfort it is better to sprinkle or christen them."

"Why, this seems like, as our high school teacher said, 'mere sentiment,'" replied Agnes.

"Then Matthew xix: 14, 15. Will Dorothy read it?"

"I will," she answered, and then read: "'But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them.'"

"But I don't see where Jesus baptized them, or asked his disciples to baptize them," Kate exclaimed.

"There are some who seek a proof for baptizing infants in Colossians ii: 11, because it refers to circumcision and baptism follows in verse 12."

"Yes, I remember, Uncle Harvey said 'infant baptism came in the place of circumcision,'" remarked Agnes. "But it does not say so here, even if it did, then infants had to be buried in the water."

"We could talk on this important subject until midnight," Esther declared. "It is now late and we should be at home. Before we separate let us pray."

After the prayer, as they parted for the night, each of the five girls declared that they could scarcely await the day when they could have the privilege of following the footsteps of Jesus in holy baptism. They then sang:

"Sweet are the promises, kind is the word,
Dearer far than any message man ever heard;
Pure was the mind of Christ, sinless I see:
He the great example is, and pattern for me.

Where he leads I'll follow,
Follow all the way;
Where he leads I'll follow,
Follow Jesus every day."

CHAPTER XII.

A VISION OF SUBMISSIVE OBEDIENCE.

Every member of Class No. 10 was fully persuaded what Jesus would have each to do; and all were decided to follow their Savior into the water in holy baptism.

During four or five consecutive Lord's days, either at morning or evening service, Pastor Charles Hoover buried with Christ in baptism in the large baptismal pool, under the pulpit, such believers in Jesus who were willing to be baptized.

At the mid-week prayer-meeting he announced: "On next Lord's day at the evening service, Lord willing, I will bury with Christ in baptism a number of candidates including every member of Class No. 10."

Tears filled the eyes of many, while several exclaimed, "Blessed be the teacher of Class No. 10," and "Praise God for Esther, the Royal Teacher." One aged Christian, a grandmother of one of the girls, who gave expression to her feelings in German, exclaimed: "Mine seele preised Gott fur dese guden neuigkeit." (My soul praises God for this good news.)

During this winter the congregation had been unusually large; but on the occasion of the baptizing of Class No. 10, the great audience room was overcrowded. In the audience, at a convenient distance from the pulpit, by previous arrangement, sat the parents and near relatives of the five girls.

More than half of the candidates for baptism were members of the Sunday-school. It was decided to

arrange the occasion in order to harmonize it with the Sunday-school interests. The Sunday-school music books were used and the officers and teachers of the Sunday-school were seated with the pupils of the school in the front part of the audience room. In front and about the platform were placed potted plants, ferns, and hothouse flowers. In artistic design festoons of evergreen were arranged over the baptismal pool. A number of "By this Sign Conquer" flags were placed here and there, while two large American flags flanked the view on both sides.

A dozen little girls from the Junior Department, dressed in white, were seated on a raised platform opposite to where the candidates were to enter the water. These were to sing at the time a member of the school reached the stairs that led to the pool.

Following the opening services, the pastor made a short address on the importance of baptism, and commented on the benefit of winning the young to Christ, and of their cheerfulness in obeying their Savior.

While the congregation sang, "Where he leads I'll follow," Pastor Hoover retired to prepare for the baptismal service. On his return he descended into the pool, where he offered a short prayer. And then one after another the candidates came forward and were assisted by an elder of the church down the steps into the pool, where the pastor buried them in baptism.

At last five girls dressed in white arose with their teacher, and calmly walked toward the recess which opened on to the platform. All eyes were specially directed to them. A stranger who was present, being impressed with the sight, asked: "Who are they? and why do they advance in a group?" When a person in

the same pew answered, "It is Class No. 10, and its Royal Teacher. She won the class to Christ."

Modest, calm, and with a smile on each one's face, akin to angelic, the five girls with Esther, their Royal Teacher, stood by the side of the pool. They were unconscious of the gaze of the large congregation, for their souls were lost in the love of Christ and their minds fixed on him whose death, burial and resurrection, as well as their deadness to the world and a resurrection to a newness of life in Christ Jesus was to be symbolized in the act of being buried in the water. The choir of twelve girls sung the last stanza of, "Where he leads I'll follow," and then the five white-robed Christians began in a soft and sweet melody to sing:

"Sweet are the promises, kind is the word,
Dearer far than any message man ever heard;
Pure was the mind of Christ, sinless I see;
He the great example is, and pattern for me.

Where he leads I'll follow,
Follow all the way;
Where he leads I'll follow,
Follow Jesus ev'ry day."

At the conclusion of the chorus, all over the room were seen handkerchiefs used in wiping tears; frequent sobs were heard, and then a deep solemn silence prevailed. The pastor then beckoned one to come forward. Irene Snyder, being the smallest, and youngest of the five, was led by her Royal Teacher to the step of the pool, when the elder assisted her to descend. Before the pastor proceeded with the ceremony, he exclaimed, "On this occasion, we behold the fruits of a zealous, consecrated effort on the part of a royal Sunday-school

teacher. These five young sisters whose souls were once dark in sin, are now willing to be buried with Christ in holy baptism. They now show that they have died to sin, and their souls have been washed in the precious blood of Jesus Christ, and are now whiter than the lily-white garments they wear. This is one of the grandest visions of submissive obedience I ever witnessed. Great is the blessing to these dear girls, yet vastly greater is the blessing and grand reward which shall descend from the eternal throne of our God upon the head and soul of Esther, the Royal Teacher."

He then asked Irene the solemn question, "Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that you have been redeemed by his own precious blood?"

"I do," softly Irene replied.

The pastor followed with, "Sister Irene, upon the confession of your faith in Jesus Christ, I now baptize you into the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen." With tender care he then immersed her entire body in the water. As she arose a radiant smile beamed from her face, and in a soft tone she exclaimed: "Blessed Jesus, if ever I loved thee, it is now."

She was assisted to the top of the steps, where she stood to witness her classmates as they followed her example. A number of the children of the primary and junior departments on seeing the joy on Irene's face, exclaimed, "She looks like an angel." While in the congregation sat many who could not restrain the flow of tears.

Dorothy Behney, in her usual quiet, meditative mood, next went down into the water. Pastor Hoover asked her the usual questions to which she responded with,

"By the grace of God, I do." "Sister Dorothy, I now baptize you into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen," the pastor said.

As Dorothy came up out of the water, her face almost said, "Now I am satisfied in his love." Others joined in the weeping, and a deep solemnity prevailed only to be disturbed by a childish voice exclaiming, "See, mamma, our Dory is buried in the water. Wen me am a big boy me wanter go that way too." It was little Benny, Dorothy's brother.

Next Agnes Stover descended and as she carefully stepped from one step to the next she exclaimed, "Blessed Jesus, as thou wast buried in the river Jordan, so I cheerfully came here to be buried in this pool. Go thou with me." This she exclaimed in a clear, distinct tone, which reached the ears of her attentive parents and Uncle Harvey who sat in the pew as rigid as a statue, barely moving a muscle.

As she came up out of the water, she again exclaimed, as if inspired to do so, "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Uncle Harvey then turned toward his brother-in-law and softly declared, "To be buried with Christ in baptism is now a new and true revelation to me."

Kate Hoverter, who once was called "Giggling Kate," now merited the name of "Smiling Kate," next descended into the pool. As she came up out of the water, her soul was filled with a holy laughing. "Happy day! happy day!" she exclaimed.

Katie's parents, who were church members of the easy sort, that evening, on beholding the peace and joy of their daughter, decided to turn fully to the Lord.

And now, Eleanor Schaner, who cheerfully yielded

the privilege to be first to the other girls, went down into the pool and was baptized. Eleanor actually shouted for joy; and as she stepped onto the platform she embraced each of the girls and her teacher, and for fully five minutes, as they stood by the side of the pool, there was such a vision of submissive obedience and conscious peace that it thrilled the entire audience, and some one began to sing, "Where he leads I'll follow."

This was more than Uncle Harvey could endure. He turned his face heavenward, while the tears coursed down his cheeks, and quietly exclaimed, "Lord Jesus, help my faith in thee. I also will follow thee. If a little child shall lead them, permit my niece to lead me." He quickly arose, walked up to the side of the pool and said, "Reverend Hoover, will you please also baptize me now?"

"If you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, I shall," the preacher replied.

"I do," Uncle Harvey declared, in a positive tone, as he began to enter the pool.

A few minutes later Uncle Harvey and the pastor stood side by side in the water. Following the usual questions concerning his faith in the blood of Christ and the knowledge of his salvation, the pastor said, "Brother Harvey, on the confession of your faith, and in obedience to my Lord's command, I now baptize you into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen."

During this time the great congregation was hushed to a solemn silence. Not a sound was heard except the words of the baptizer and the candidate, and the subdued sound of the motion of the water.

As the candidates retired to the several rooms to change garments, the pastor standing on the edge of the

platform announced, "In two weeks from this evening, the Green Street church will observe the ordinances of God's house, or that of washing of one another's feet and the blessed Lord's Supper. All whose hearts have been touched with the blood of the new covenant are invited to take part." After which he pronounced the benediction, and the congregation was dismissed.

Slowly, but gradually, the people departed for their homes. Here and there stood small groups conversing, or greeting one another. One person remarked, "I never saw anything like this before." Another said, "I have decided to search the Scriptures to see who are to be baptized and how." "So am I," replied his neighbor.

"This sight is certainly one which makes me think how it was in Jesus' and his Apostles' times," said an aged man.

Two women who stood well toward the front of the room were engaged in conversation concerning the event of the evening. One whose heart had been sad for many months, but whose face now beamed a satisfied assurance, exclaimed, "Six months ago my darling baby Lizzie died. She died suddenly. Often I had intended to have her christened, but I put it off from time to time. O, how it grieved me. Several of my neighbors reminded me that my darling baby was lost, because it was not christened. Many tears I shed, many wakeful nights I experienced, many pangs of sorrow pierced my soul. This evening all is gone. My soul is full of the sweetest peace. I now feel assured that I shall in the sweet by and by meet her in the presence of him who said, 'Suffer little children to come unto me.' I see it now, only those who can and do believe are to be baptized. O my soul, praise ye the Lord; my Lizzie is safe with thee."

"True," replied the other woman. "For a long time I had to struggle with this doubt. I asked my pastor. He gave me little or no comfort except he said, 'Parents are too negligent regarding this matter.' But, thank God, when I searched the blessed word of God a stream of golden light filled my soul. Now I know if I continue to live right I shall some happy day meet my loved ones around God's eternal throne."

CHAPTER XIII.

JOY OF HUMILITY.

During the greater part of that week those who witnessed the sublime baptismal scene of the last Lord's day continued to talk about it. It was certain that a deep impression had been made and that many self-satisfied Christians were inspired to search the New Testament about baptism. It was as one said, "I want to get my idea on baptism first-handed. I am going to study the word of God."

At the mid-week prayer-meeting, which class No. 10 was sure to attend, Pastor Hoover again announced the ordinance service of Washing of Feet and the Lord's Supper.

"Miss Esther, must we also wash feet?" asked Kate Hoverter.

"No, indeed. Jesus does not care for 'must obedience,'" Esther, the Royal Teacher, assured her. "Jesus desires only loving obedience to his will as we see it."

"Can we see his will, if we don't look for it?" asked Irene Snyder.

"We cannot. In order to know what he would have us to do we need to read his holy word," Esther informed her.

"When can we meet to search the Scriptures on the Washing of Feet?" asked Dorothy Behney.

"To-morrow evening. Please come to my home. Meanwhile search the New Testament," Esther advised them.

In the cozy room of Miss Esther Forney, five anxious girls and their teacher sat around the large table above which was a soft white gas light. Following a short prayer, the teacher asked, "Have you found any scripture for feet washing?"

"We have found it mentioned at two places," exclaimed several. "John xiii: 1-17, and I Timothy v: 10."

"Will Agnes Stover please read what John xiii: says?" asked Esther.

"I will," Agnes replied, and then read the first seventeen verses.

"Now let us, silently, each one for herself, read slowly these seventeen verses; think, consider, study each verse and reason for yourself. Let us take our time, at least thirty minutes before any one asks a question," Esther suggested.

A glance at that studying class reminded one of so many scientists investigating some marvelous phenomenon or wonder.

"The thirty minutes are ended," Esther called.

"O my!" cried Eleanor Schaner, "It seemed like only ten minutes."

"Miss Esther, that certainly was a great humiliation for Jesus, who is our Lord and Master, to wash his disciples' feet," Kate declared.

"But I suppose it was no great humiliation for Jesus. For what a person loves to do is no humiliation," quickly asserted Irene.

"Does Jesus expect his followers to wash one another's feet?" Dorothy asked.

"Let us read the word," Esther said. "Please read verse fifteen."

One read, "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

"What is an example?" asked Kate.

"Don't you know, Katie?" exclaimed Agnes, "It is a pattern, model or copy which is to be followed. You know how our school teacher wrote examples on the blackboard and told us to copy after. I guess you have not forgot how you got your fingers cracked when you didn't carefully follow that example in square-root several weeks ago."

"Did Jesus mean that we should do exactly as he did?" Irene asked.

"Why do you ask such a question?" Eleanor exclaimed.

"Because I am anxious to know; and be fully persuaded in my own mind," Irene replied.

"That is perfectly right, dear little Irene," the Royal Teacher declared.

"Irene may read the fourteenth verse." Irene read, "'If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.'" Irene then added, "This looks as if I ought to do it."

"You know what verse fourteen reads," Esther said. "Now read the seventeenth verse."

Irene read, "'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.'"

"O, Miss Esther," cheerfully exclaimed Dorothy, "I see, this is the joy of humility."

"This is exactly what it is," Agnes replied. "Jesus humbled himself for the joy that was set before him." In Philippians ii: 8, 9, I read, 'And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Where-

fore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.' Then I read in Hebrews xii: 2, 'Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.'" "That is good reasoning," Esther assured Agnes.

"This is beautiful; and Jesus also tells us in Matthew xviii: 4," exclaimed Kate, "'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.'"

"Jesus never was ashamed to humble himself," Irene declared.

"Neither will I be!"

'Ashamed of Jesus! that dear Friend,
On whom my hopes of heaven depend!
No; when I blush, be this my shame,
That I no more revere his name.'"

"I wonder what is puzzling Dorothy. She looks so grave," Esther remarked.

"O, I was just looking at the fifteenth verse. I see it now. I see it now," Dorothy repeated. "Jesus, after he had washed his disciples' feet, sat down and explained to them why he did it. Here he says, 'I have given you an example.' Simply one example. Nowhere else can I find where Jesus said these words, so he surely must be particular about this one example. Then he commands us to 'do as I have done to you.'"

"You see, girls, that our Savior wants us to do exactly as he did," said the teacher. "But what example did Jesus mean? He speaks of only one example."

"Don't you know, Miss Esther?" exclaimed two or three at once.

"Yes, I know; but I desire to learn whether you know. What example do you think he meant?" the teacher asked.

"Why, of course, the example of washing one another's feet," the class responded, and Agnes added, "Jesus says something like this, 'I have washed your feet. Now go and do as I have done by washing one another's feet.'"

"We shall now look at the example which Jesus asks us to follow," Esther suggested. "You know, that on the night Judas Iscariot, the traitor, betrayed our Savior, Jesus observed the feast of the Passover in an upper room in Jerusalem. It was during this feast that Jesus arose from the couch on which he leaned and gave to his disciples the example to which he referred in verse fifteen. Let us slowly read, beginning at the fourth verse and read a verse and think over it before we proceed with the next verse."

All read in one accord verse four.

"I see," exclaimed Kate, "Jesus did four acts. He arose, he laid aside his garments, took a towel and girded himself. This is as clear as daylight example."

Next the fifth verse. "Here," added Agnes, "are three more acts. He poured water into a basin, then washed his disciples' feet, then wiped them with the towel. So far we have here seven acts in this example. Seven is the number of perfection."

"Here we have in these two verses the entire example Jesus commanded his disciples to follow," declared Dorothy. "This is as easy to follow as any rule I ever learned in school."

"Wasn't Peter foolish to object to Jesus washing his feet?" asked Irene.

"I suppose he was, as so many people are to-day unable, or perhaps unwilling, to understand," Esther replied.

"Yes! yes!" cried Eleanor, "In verse seven Jesus says, 'What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter,' and in the twelfth verse he asks, 'Know ye what I have done to you?' Then he teaches them."

"Miss Esther, it seems to me that Jesus attached great and living importance to feet-washing, when he said to Peter, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me,'" Agnes remarked.

"There is something strange in the manner the Green Street church follows this example," exclaimed Eleanor, who often saw the ordinances observed.

"What is it, Eleanor?" asked the teacher.

"Why Jesus said, 'Do as I have done to you,'" Eleanor replied. "Yet I notice that sometimes one person washes the feet of all who came forward. This way many have their feet washed, but only a few actually do what Jesus did. If feet-washing is a sign of humility, I don't see it as an humble act when some other person does the washing. I must do the washing."

"O this is done to hasten the observance, and for convenience," the teacher sadly replied. "It actually is not following the example."

"Did Jesus ever do a thing for convenience, or to hurry things?" asked Irene.

"Never! never!" exclaimed the Royal Teacher.

"Well, I for one," declared Irene, "If I have the opportunity, I want to wash the feet of at least several, just as Jesus did."

"So do I," responded the remainder of the class.

"Since I know that Jesus asks me to do this, it does

not seem a bit like a burden, nor a task. To me it seems as one act of loving obedience," Kate declared.

"To me it seems to be an easy act," Agnes declared. "At one time I thought I would rather desert from Christ than do what he commanded in John xiii. But now it seems to be my chief joy and delight. O, how truly Jesus says in Matthew xi: 30, 'My yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'"

"Miss Esther, why is it that the ordinances of Feet-washing and the Lord's Supper are observed at the same time and in the same place?" Dorothy asked.

"Because it is generally believed that Jesus instituted both at the same time and in the same room."

"What do you think a minister once said to my father?" asked Eleanor.

"Hard to tell. What was it?" asked Esther.

"He said, 'It was funny how some churches try to find from so little Bible proof to support feet-washing. That it is only in John's gospel they find it,'" Eleanor replied.

"What did you father say to him?" Esther inquired.

"Father said, 'It is not half so funny as some try to prove infant baptism, when there is not a word in the Bible for it.' The preacher walked away, saying, 'O, there's no use arguing with you,'" Eleanor replied.

"O, my!" exclaimed one of the girls, "I had no idea it was so late. I surely must hurry home."

After a few words of friendly talk each left for her home, and all anxious to do just what Jesus wanted them to do.

It was arranged to hold another Bible study meeting during the following week. They again met in their teacher's home to search the Scriptures about the

Lord's Supper. During the time between these two meetings nothing unusual transpired. Class No. 10 was regular in attendance on the several means of grace and were well informed in their Sunday-school lessons.

The evening for Bible searching had arrived, and the class with its Royal Teacher, after each of the girls offered a prayer, sat around the big table as at the former meeting.

Agnes was the first to speak on the subject of the Lord's Supper. She said, "I have heard or read very little about the differences regarding the Lord's Supper."

"There are different ideas concerning it," replied Esther. "Yet very little is said about it. All agree that Jesus instituted it. That bread and the fruit of the vine are symbols which represent it. Some claim that by a certain ceremonial act these symbols became the real flesh and blood of Jesus Christ; others that after the bread and fruit of the vine are consecrated the body and blood of Christ are present; while others claim it is to represent the suffering and death of Christ, as baptism represents his burial and resurrection and the washing of feet his humility."

"What does the church of God teach?" asked Dorothy.

"Let us see what the Bible says," suggested Esther.

All were ready with open Bibles, and anxious to learn. "What passage have you, Agnes?" Esther asked.

"I have," Agnes replied, "Matthew xxvi: 26, 27, 'And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat, this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' Almost the

same words are used in Mark xiv: 22 and Luke xxii: 19. In I Corinthians x: 11 it reads a little different."

Dorothy replied, "In I Corinthians xi, beginning at verse 23, I read what was revealed to the Apostle Paul."

In one accord teacher and class read to the end of the chapter. Then Agnes remarked, "I see in verse 26 the object of the Lord's Supper."

"Please read it, Agnes," the teacher asked.

Agnes read, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he comes."

The class had a long talk on this subject and then departed for their homes.

CHAPTER XIV.

HIS YOKE IS EASY, HIS BURDEN IS LIGHT.

The Lord's day on which in the evening the Green Street church of God was to observe the ordinances of Washing of Feet and the Lord's Supper had arrived. The usual preparation for the occasion had been arranged. At the morning services Pastor Charles Hoover preached a searching sermon on self-examination and the need of a surrendered life. Several thought the sermon too radical, while a few thought he meant several of their neighbors. Class No. 10 and its teacher tried to benefit by it, and seek a life in closer communion with their blessed Savior.

In the evening a large congregation filled the audience-room. By request of Pastor Hoover the chorister and organist selected familiar hymns and sung them in a very reverential spirit.

Following the opening services and the announcements, the pastor made brief remarks on the ordinances of God's house. After which he extended a cheerful invitation to all exclaiming, "In regard to what we now shall do, we invite all of God's redeemed children to feel perfectly free to participate in these ordinances. If the blood of Jesus Christ has touched your hearts, it is your opportunity to come. The brothers and sisters will occupy their usual places. I have one special request to make, and I believe it is in harmony with Christ's example, to give as many as possible the privilege to wash the feet of others, and I shall add, let those who

have washed feet permit those who never have, and especially give preference to the young converts."

During the singing of an old-fashioned hymn, old and young came forward, and at once cheerfully participated in the washing of feet. One, a friend, remarked to a friend: "This certainly is a correct commentary on John xiii."

After the first group had finished and returned to their seats, a second invitation was given, when Esther, the Royal Teacher, with her class of obedient disciples of Christ came forward. Esther had asked the privilege for her class to sing a favorite hymn of theirs, or part of it. The chorister announced, "Class No. 10 will now sing. The congregation, accompanied by the organ, will join in the appropriate chorus." The class began to sing:

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want,
He maketh me down to lie
In pastures green he leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

"All together," called the chorister, as the organ sounded. "All together in the chorus."

"His yoke is easy, his burden is light,
I've found it so, I've found it so;
He leadeth me, by day and by night,
Where living waters flow."

The class sat down and began to wash one another's feet while the congregation sang the remainder of the hymn. Lovingly and tenderly the girls girded themselves with the towels and then several began to wash the feet of those occupying the front chairs.

Little Irene washed the feet of an aged saint. The

white haired sister exclaiming, "*Gotter willen seit gethan, wir sich neidrig dar wird erhaben.*" (God's will be done. Who so humbles herself shall be exalted.) Kate had the pleasure to wash the feet of her Royal Teacher. Agnes, Dorothy and Eleanor engaged in the washing of feet. Agnes remarked, "This is a correct copy of the example our Savior gave us."

"Indeed it is," replied Eleanor, whose feet Agnes was washing. Eleanor washed the feet of her own dear mother, who wept with joy. When the second group had returned to their seats Pastor Hoover gave another invitation. This time a number of young converts who hesitated to take part in the ordinance of washing feet, were inspired by the royal action of Class No. 10, came forward and followed the example given by their adorable Redeemer.

At the conclusion of this part of the service a general invitation was extended for "whosoever is washed in the blood of the Lamb and wills to show Christ's death until he comes again," to come forward.

Group after group came forward. Following a short prayer and the blessing on the emblems by the pastor, those who surrounded the table of the Lord then repeated in a low tone the Lord's Prayer, and then sang one stanza of "Alas and did my Savior bleed."

The pastor and one of the elders, who also was Superintendent, Austin Sigler, passed the bread and wine. Superintendent Sigler made a brief address, in which he referred to the burden for souls in the Sunday-school, which heavily laid upon his heart during the Christmas month, and how his mind was perplexed concerning Class No. 10. "Now," he said, "since I witnessed the delightful scene of this evening and what the grace of

Jesus Christ has done, and how by the golden chords of holy love the church and Sunday-school, the teachers and their classes, are bound together, as one magnificent band marching on from conquest to conquest, from victory to victory, all advancing heavenward. This is indeed a heavenly sight. I feel like crying aloud with Simeon of old when he held in his arms the Christ-child. 'Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace. For mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' May Christ's love fill your souls with the peace of God which passes all understanding."

"Let us sing," announced the chorister, "'How sweet, how heavenly is thy sight.'" All sang:

"How sweet, how heavenly is thy sight,
When those who love the Lord
In one another's peace delight,
And so fulfil his word."

During the remainder of the communion service many yielded to their feelings to weep, others sobbed heavily for joy. Now and then aged saints praised God aloud.

The pastor closed the services by saying: "I desire to express my great joy for the delightful services of the evening. You have shown your love and devotion to God, and manifested your mutual interest in one another's eternal welfare.

"I also wish to exhort the young convert on the great need of watchfulness, of private prayer and frequent reading of God's word. While there are numerous snares and pitfalls all along the way of life, so long as you keep in close touch with Jesus Christ, the Captain of our salvation, there is no great danger of falling. Jesus' grace is sufficient for all, yet as the beloved John

says: 'My little children, sin not,' and again he says, 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' I now ask the teachers to become more interested in your converted scholars and seek to aid them in right living and Christian service."

At the close of the service Class No. 10 gathered about the Royal Teacher and exclaimed, "Miss Esther, will you please teach us how to live right and engage in Christ's service?"

"Certainly, most cheerfully, by his grace I shall, if you desire it," Esther assured them. "Let me think, what evening I have which I can take for our meeting. Friday evening next. How will that answer?"

"All right so far as we know," the class replied.

On Friday evening the class met in Miss Esther Forney's cozy room for prayer and study of God's word.

"Our pastor, on Lord's day evening, warned us against snares and pitfalls," exclaimed Dorothy.

"So he did," replied Kate. "What did he mean?"

"He referred to the many dangers and allurements of sin and the world which are ready to draw Christians away from their Savior," Esther informed them. "Read God's word, I Timothy iii: 7, last clause."

Eleanor read, "'And the snare of the devil.'"

"Ah! I notice," Irene said, "It is the devil, our enemy, who tried to trap us."

"Exactly so," Esther assured her. "See vi: 9."

"Ha! ha! there is danger for the rich to fall in a snare. may be it is good that I am not rich," Dorothy replied.

"Read II Timothy ii: 26," Esther said.

"'Snare of the devil' again," said one.

"What is a pitfall?" asked Eleanor.

"It is a pit covered over for concealment, so that no

one can see the danger. Men or beast passing over it are liable to break through the covering and are trapped," replied Esther.

"That's it," exclaimed Agnes. "These are some of Satan's devices to hide our danger from us."

"Is it any wonder that the Scriptures are full of calling to watch?" exclaimed Kate.

"No wonder at all. Jesus and his Apostles knew all about Satan's tricks," answered Esther. "Let us read several warnings; who has any?"

"I have," replied the girls in unison.

"Please read," exclaimed Esther. One girl after the other read.

Matthew xxvi: 41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Mark xiii: 33: "Take ye heed, watch and pray."

I Corinthians x: 12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

I Thessalonians v: 6: "Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober."

Luke xxi: 36: "Watch ye therefore and pray always."

"As each one had a verse, I think we have warning enough," exclaimed Esther. "These warnings are like so many light-houses along the ocean where danger lies. We read much about temptation, that is when inducements are offered to lead one into sin."

"I suppose the wise man meant this when he said in Proverbs i: 10, 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not.'"

"That is the idea," Esther continued. "In the epistle of James, the first chapter, we learn helpful ideas about temptation."

The girls then carefully read this chapter when one asked: "Is it a sin to be tempted? The other day I was tempted to slap a girl in the face, but I didn't. Was that a sin?"

"No, my dear child, that was no sin," Esther assured her. "Jesus was tempted, yet he did not sin. Read James i: 14, 15."

She read, "'But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then, when lust has conceived, it bringeth forth sin.'"

"I am so glad to know this, for I grieved because I had such an evil feeling," she replied. "I now better understand the hymn we sometimes sing:

'Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin.'

"Yes! yes! I see. Yielding to the temptation is sin. I thank my dear Savior. When I felt like slapping that girl, I simply said, 'Jesus, don't let me slap her,' and I didn't."

"That surely was a victory for you, my brave little soldier," Esther replied. "It is always a good practice to keep as far away from temptations as possible."

"That is nearly like my grandpa once said," exclaimed Dorothy. "I asked him if there was danger for me to be stung by the bees in his garden. He said, 'No danger whatever if you keep far enough from them.'"

"There is no danger of falling into a pitfall or being caught in a trap so long as we keep by the side of our Savior," Esther replied. "At the same time it is a prudent act to be always on the *lookout* for danger and *looking* to the Bible for warning. I have a picture of a young girl who holds in one hand a looking-glass, and

in the other a telescope. By the glass she sees in her rear a fierce lion, and by the telescope she sees a serpent ready to bite her."

"I read in Proverbs xxii: 3," Agnes exclaimed, "'A prudent man foresees the evil.'"

"You remember what Jesus did when he was tempted of Satan," Esther asked. "Let us read in Matthew chapter iv. This was after Jesus was baptized in the river of Jordan. Each read for herself."

"O! I see," the girls replied. "He whipped old Satan with the word of God."

"Wasn't that good? Jesus just knew how to strike back at his enemy," Kate gleefully exclaimed.

"You see, girls," said Esther, "the word of God is a mighty weapon with which to oppose our enemy."

Quickly Agnes replied: "In Ephesians vi: 17, I read: 'Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.'"

"We also need to keep always right with God, and keep ourselves rid of the many little sins that fasten unto us like so many detestable barnacles. These are more dangerous than big sins, as they are not so readily detected," Esther warned them.

"O Miss Esther, what are barnacles?" the class cried.

"Girls, I am sorry it is too late to describe them this evening. At our next meeting I shall. We now need to close," Esther replied.

CHAPTER XV.

CAN THE LORD DEPEND ON US?

“What are barnacles?” was the question that interested the members of Class No. 10. Esther Forney, the Royal Teacher, was equally interested, as she was anxious to impress upon the tender hearts of the five girls a practical lesson. During the session of the Sunday-school following their last Friday evening’s Bible searching meeting, they asked, “Miss Esther, when may we have another such a delightful Bible study as we had last Friday? and will you then tell us what barnacles are?”

“Let me think a moment,” Esther asked. “There is mid-week prayer-meeting, Teacher Training Class study. One evening I give to our Dorcas Society. Monday evening, early, I may find time for an hour’s study. Seven o’clock. How will that answer?”

“We shall try to make it answer,” several replied. “It may be a little after seven,” Irene Snyder remarked, “as I want to assist mother all I can before I come.”

“Happy is the mother who has such a loving daughter,” exclaimed Esther. “We will wait a short time for you.”

On Monday evening a little before seven, there came a “ding a ling, ling” of the door bell. Esther hurried to answer the bell when to her surprise the five girls were there.

“Girls! girls!” cried Esther, “you beat the insurance collector on being on time. And here is Irene. How did you manage to get off so early?”

"Very easily," laughingly replied Irene. "Dorothy Behney and Kate Hoverter came over and helped me."

"That's splendid. The Bible teaches us to bear one another's burden," replied Esther.

Five minutes later, all were seated around the big table. After a short time in prayer, the teacher asked them to read "verse about," Hebrews xii. "I suppose you are anxious to learn a lesson from the barnacles?" Esther asked. "We certainly are," the girls replied.

"Miss Esther, I know what barnacles are," exclaimed Agnes Stover, "but I can't see what they have to do with young Christians."

"This is exactly what puzzled me," Eleanor Schaner added.

"I don't know what they are," said Irene.

"Agnes may tell you what they are; and I'll explain what I mean about them," Esther answered.

"A barnacle is a small shell fish, a little like an oyster. The shells are numerous along sea-shores, where they stick fast to rocks, timber and ships," Agnes declared.

"You see, girls," Esther begun, "These little shells adhere, or stick fast to the sides and bottom of ships. So many gather there until a thick crust is formed on the sides and bottom of the vessel that it interferes with the swift movement of the vessel. Ships' sides and bottoms, like the fish, must be smooth so that they can glide through the water. When the ships get too rough by these barnacles they are taken to a dry-dock and men scrape off these shells."

"I suppose that is what they did to a ship in Cramp's dry-dock in Philadelphia once when cousin Edward took me there," exclaimed Kate. "I saw them scraping the ship."

"Well, just so it is with us who are followers of Jesus," Esther exclaimed. "Little sins, little negligence of duty, little bad habits, little staying from prayer-meeting, little slang, little reading of bad books, little cross words and a thousand other little things stick fast to our minds and hearts until as barnacles they become so numerous that they interfere with our progress in Christian life. We cannot get going forward. Now, please read Hebrews xii: 1, 2." "'Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses. Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, etc.'" For a few minutes all eyes were riveted on these two verses. "Now," exclaimed Esther, "if we are to make progress in Christian life we must get rid of the little sins in the shape of bad habits which like barnacles hold us back. Every weight of sin, even if it is only one ounce of sin, bears us down. You know how small a clover seed is; but put thousands of them together you will have a heap. The other day several snow-flakes fell on the railroad bars, and the Mogul engine crushed them to a speck. Twenty-four hours later a union of these little flakes held fast the engine. Just so many little sins if accumulated, will hinder the strongest Christian."

"That's so, Miss Esther," Agnes cried. "I know that I have to fight to keep little bad habits from clinging to me."

"How do you get rid of them?" asked Kate.

"O, that is easy," Agnes assured her. "When anything comes to my mind which I think is sinful or even harmful, I just make up my mind I won't do it, and

then I have a little talk with Jesus; then I feel as free as a bird."

"I see," exclaimed Eleanor. "You felt as I read in the Psalms cxxiv: 7: 'Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and we are escaped.'

"That's it," Agnes replied, "whenever I get rid of a bad habit, I feel so light that I could almost fly."

"Miss Esther, is there any great danger of bad habits sticking to us?" asked Dorothy.

"There is danger," Esther informed her. "Yet so long as you watch and pray, study God's word, attend religious services and do good, there is no danger. We need to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ; and Jesus will not forsake us. One blessed thing is that we can always depend on Jesus."

"That is true," quietly exclaimed Irene. "But can Jesus always depend on us?"

"I trust, girls, that the Lord can always depend on Class No. 10," the Royal Teacher replied.

"I remember hearing my grandpa singing a hymn," Dorothy added. "That had something in it about an armour bearer on whom Jesus could depend. I can't think what it was."

"O, I know," Eleanor gleefully replied. "It is the chorus of a hymn my grandpa said he heard Mr. Sankey sing many years ago. The first line is, 'Only an armour-bearer, proudly I stand,' and the chorus, if I remember, is:

'Hear ye the battly cry! Forward the call!
See! see the falling ones! backward they fall.
Surely the Captain may depend on me,
Though but an armour-bearer I may be.
Surely the Captain may depend on me,
Though but an armour-bearer I may be.'

"Truly, girls, let us so live that we may always be ready and willing to 'Forward go!' at Christ's command," Esther exhorted them. "Yet we have opportunity to be even more than an armour-bearer."

"What can that be?" the class asked.

"That is being lights of the world and salt of the earth," Esther replied.

"Miss Esther, I am glad you mention this," Agnes exclaimed, "for I read in Matthew v:14: 'Ye are the light of the world,' etc. Does it not mean that our conduct or actions is the light?"

"It is our character, our lives, our being good and doing good," Esther exclaimed. "Others see our lives and learn by them that we are by the grace of Jesus good, and by our good example others are led in the path of righteousness. A lighted lamp is to show us our way and also to show to others the way to Christ."

"My! my! ain't that strange?" exclaimed Kate. "Then we are like lights, either on the dining-room table, or on a street lamp post. Well, I want, God helping me, to shine, shine all the time and anywhere and everywhere."

"That is a splendid resolution, Katie," replied Esther. "I pray that Jesus may help you and that many struggling seamen may, by your light, be led to Christ our mighty Rescuer."

"Once I was at a Rescue Mission in Philadelphia," Kate remarked. "Cousin Edward took me there. I saw some rough looking men there, and drunken women, and a number of sailors. At this meeting a man got up and sang a hymn about 'The lower lights be burning.' When everybody was asked to join in singing:

'Let the lower lights be burning!
Send a gleam across the waves;
Some poor fainting, struggling seaman
You may rescue, you may save.'

You just should have seen how several of those sailors cried."

"I wonder how I can show my light," asked Irene.
"I am so little."

"Little lights are often real serviceable," Esther assured her. "In the deep, dark recesses of the coal mines the miners are aided in digging coal by small oil lamps they hook to their caps. By the aid of these small lights millions of tons of coal are mined. On a very dark night a small lantern light is of great service. Irene, small as you are, you can let your light shine in your little corner. Your mother and your loved ones at home, and wherever you go they can see your Christian light shine. You may, and we may by our splendid life, conduct and service, help others over dark and rugged steeps, and draw them away from sin to our dear Savior. Again I pray that Class No. 10 may shine as bright as the sun at midday. It is not alone needful for us to shine for others, but by our shining we light up our own pathway, as a candle that gives light to others, lights its own surrounding. While it lives for others it lives for itself, and above all we have a sun-light opportunity to live for Jesus."

"That is exactly what I read about Paul in Romans xiv: 8," called Agnes. "It says, 'Whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.'"

"Is this what is meant by a surrendered life, Miss

Esther?" asked Dorothy. "It is and a holy, happy, blessed life it is," Esther assured her. "When we surrender our will to Jesus' will, then we are one in him."

"Then, no wonder the Apostle Paul was such a devoted servant of Jesus Christ," exclaimed Eleanor. "I just now opened the Bible at Galatians ii: 20, and I read, 'I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which now I live in the flesh. I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

"Eleanor, this is certainly a wonderful verse," Esther assured her, "and one which we may treasure in our souls as the guiding star of our hope in eternal life and the return of our dear Jesus. Before we separate let us sing a verse or two. It may be our last meeting here for a long time. What shall we sing?"

"I'll live for him," Class No. 10 replied. All sung:

"My life, my love I give to thee,
Thou Lamb of God who died for me;
Oh, may I ever faithful be,
My Savior and my God.

I'll live for him who died for me,
How happy then my life shall be;
I'll live for him who died for me,
My Savior and my God."

"My darling girls at least for the present we shall not have these helpful and delightful opportunities to meet to search the Scriptures as we have done. But we shall continue to pray for one another, cheer and comfort one another, watch and warn one another as we make progress in Christian life and advance heavenward," Esther Forney, the Royal Teacher said to Class No. 10,

on the evening when other important services for Christ called her elsewhere, and she was compelled to say, "Good-bye," at least for a time.

Before the class departed, all exclaimed: "The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from the other."

THE END.



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